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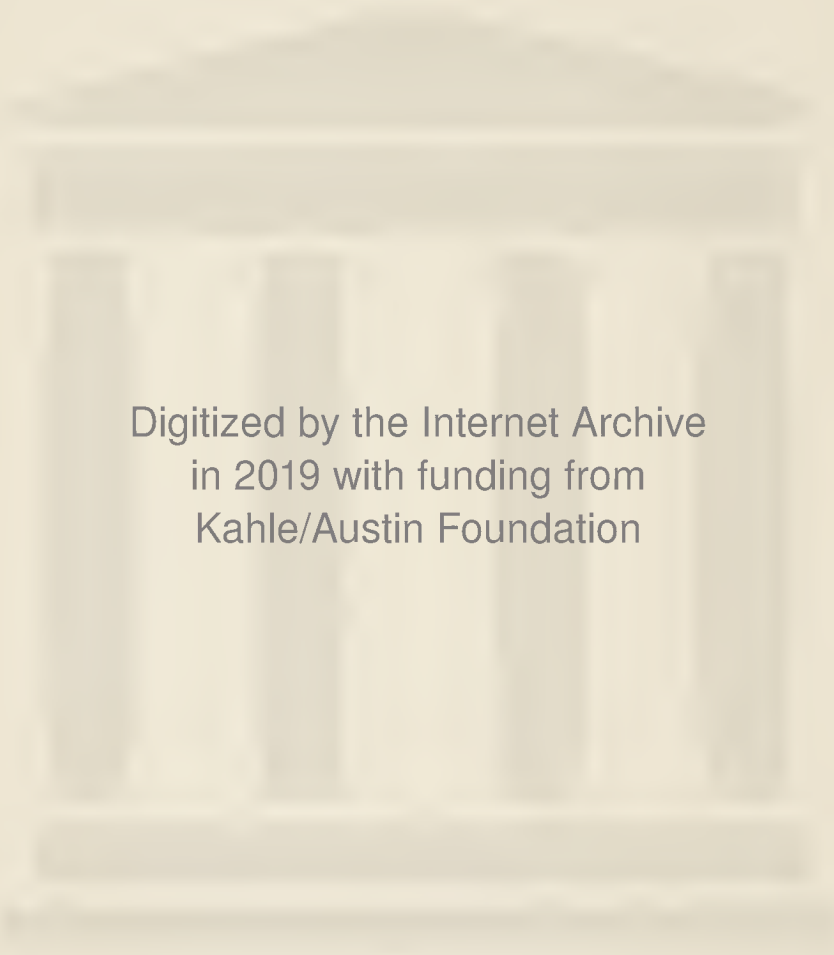
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**BISHOP JOHN SELWYN**







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# BISHOP JOHN SELWYN

A MEMOIR

BY A. D. N. S.

BY THE REV. J. H. S.

LONDON

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# BISHOP JOHN SELWYN

## A MEMOIR

BY

F. D. HOW

AUTHOR OF

"BISHOP WALSHAM HOW: A MEMOIR"<sup>2d</sup>  
ETC.

LONDON

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TO THE MOTHER  
WHOSE INSPIRATION BREATHES THROUGH  
ALL HIS LIFE AND LETTERS  
THIS BRIEF MEMORIAL  
OF  
BISHOP JOHN SELWYN  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY  
DEDICATED



## PREFACE

THE following sketch of Bishop John Selwyn has appeared to me more and more inadequate in proportion as, in the course of writing it, I have been privileged to become more and more familiar with the beauties of his life and character.

Such as it is, I lay it before those who knew and loved him well, and beg them to pardon its deficiencies.

The members of the Bishop's family were urgent that the book should be short. With this desire I fully sympathise, but it has in some measure added to my difficulties.

Before the work was undertaken another hand had begun to write a history of the Melanesian Mission. I undertook to trespass as little as possible upon this ground. Those, therefore, who desire to read chiefly of mission work must await the publication of that history.

I wish to give warm thanks to those who have so greatly helped me. Chief of these are the members of the Selwyn family, who will not desire a special mention of their names. Besides these I am deeply grateful to Mrs. à Court-Repington, Mrs. Long Innes, Mrs. Balston, the Lord Bishop of Newcastle, the Rev. Dr. Codrington, the Rev. John Still, the Rev. F. E. Waters, the Rev. the Provost of Eton, the Rev. C. Abraham, the Rev. O. Mordaunt, the Rev. Professor Stanton, the Rev. A. Penny, the Rev. J. O. F. Murray, Robert Kinglake, Esq., Richard Durnford, Esq., and Charles Bill, Esq., M.P.

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## CHAPTER I

### EARLY LIFE

JOHN RICHARDSON SELWYN was born on May 20, 1844. Of him alone of our Missionary Bishops it may be said that he was born in the region of his future labours, for his birthplace was the Waimate in the Bay of Islands in the northern part of New Zealand. There it was that his father, George Augustus Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand, had established his headquarters, making use of the roomy wooden station belonging to the Church Missionary Society. There too St. John's College, "a Polynesian College for the different branches of the Maori family scattered over the Pacific," first saw the light, and there it remained until some difficulty with the owners caused its removal in 1846 to Auckland.

Owing to these circumstances the future Bishop of Melanesia could never in after life have felt himself the stranger in the Islands that many another man would have done, for the Maoris were

proud to boast that he was one of themselves, and the sound of their languages was as familiar to his baby ears as was his mother tongue. Then again, when the College was moved to Auckland he was taken thither also by his parents, and his earliest childhood was passed in an institution where Maori and English boys learnt lessons side by side and lived a life in common. It was when he was five years old that his father returned on October 1, 1849, at midnight from a cruise among the Islands in the schooner *Undine*. Mrs. Selwyn was aroused by the Bishop's voice exultingly exclaiming "I've got them!" "Them" turned out to be five little savage boys, the first of many who afterwards were brought in to be educated, and to form in time a native clergy for Melanesia.

With these little natives Johnnie Selwyn made great friends, and, when one of them was ill with a disease which proved fatal, it was Johnnie Selwyn's name which was on his lips as he kept constantly calling for his beloved playmate.

All these things must have had their effect, and, though for many years he lived in England at school and college, and though his knowledge of the Maori language was entirely lost, yet the seeds sown in the first ten years of his life were destined to bear ample fruit.

The influence of his father was but little felt in these early days. There were, it is true, strong

traits of character directly inherited; there came also in later life that admiration for his father's work and desire to share in it which was so large a factor in his dedication to missionary work; but as a child he saw little of him. "My boyhood, alas!" he wrote,\* "can remember little of my father. I can remember him suddenly appearing in the middle of the night, fresh from one of those voyages which laid, with so much daring and so much forethought, the foundations of the Melanesian Mission. I can recall the dingy cabin of his little schooner, creaking and groaning in a gale of wind off the coast of New Zealand, and a figure in wet and shiny oilskins coming down from the long watch on deck to see how my mother and I were faring below."

It was on his mother that he depended from the very first. It was from his mother and from her alone that he learnt his earliest lessons. In those first years of his life he and his mother were so closely welded together that no distance of space or time was ever able afterwards to loosen the bond between them. There is an old rhyme which says :

My son is my son till he gets him a wife,  
My daughter's my daughter all her life.

This was certainly falsified in John Selwyn's case. No matter what friendships he made or what ties

\* Selwyn College Calendar, 1894.

he formed in the course of his life, he never altered one hair's breadth in his devoted intimacy with his mother.

It is curious to note in a man of so essentially "manly" a type some characteristics which show that he also possessed certain feminine qualities of mind and even habits. His handwriting may, perhaps, be taken as typical of this. This twofold nature especially endeared him as a child to his mother. "He was my son and my daughter," she says, "he was *exactly* like a son *and* a daughter." She bears witness at the same time to his having been a very spirited boy, and to his having shown at an early age some of those traits which became familiar afterwards—as, for instance, an unfailing courtesy, and a quickness of temper followed by an equally quick desire to make amends. Mrs. Selwyn was fortunate enough to take out with her an admirable servant who, in spite of severe illness, remained faithful to her in her New Zealand home, and, as was the case with most women who came in contact with him, became devoted to John Selwyn, whom she nursed from the hour of his birth. Her love for him was fully returned, and their affectionate relations were maintained to the end of her life a few years ago. He would often go to visit her after he became a Bishop, and the story goes that on his first arrival she would address him with some awe as "My Lord," then in a little while it would come

down to "Bishop," and then to "Master Johnnie," and at last, when old memories swept everything before them, it was always "My darling Johnnie." This same old friend bore witness to the early piety of the boy, saying that she remembered well finding him, when a very little fellow, on his knees praying for her at a time when she was far from well. This habit of prayer grew with his growth, and it will be seen how greatly it influenced his life from beginning to end.

Of his chief interests as a little lad there is not much to be recorded excepting that, like most small boys, he was very fond of fishing, of which he was able to get plenty—of a sort!—from the rocks at Taurarua, where they used constantly to stay with Sir William Martin, the Chief Justice. One of his chief delights then as always was history and all connected with it. He knew all about the chief battles by land and sea, and, as he himself said in a letter long afterwards, "whatever I read of that sort, it just sticks." When he was quite a little fellow he was most indignant and contemptuous because some of the boys at St. John's College, Auckland, didn't know the ballad of "Chevy Chase." This keenness made the history lessons with his mother a delight to them both, and she well remembers his intense enjoyment of Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." His only other teacher at this time was Mr. Abraham (now Bishop), who taught him his first Latin.



In May 1854 the Bishop of New Zealand and Mrs. Selwyn came to England, and then for the first time John Selwyn set foot in his mother country. What a marvellous change it must have seemed to him ! A change from the life of a young colony to the old-world English ways, from the little black Maori boys of St. John's, Auckland, to the manners and customs of the most famous of our public schools. He was sent to Eton very soon after his arrival in England, and it was arranged that his holidays should be spent at Ely. His father's eldest brother, Professor Selwyn, was one of the Canons there, and another relative living there at that time was Mrs. Peacocke, wife of the Dean, and his father's youngest sister. It was with this aunt that most of his time was spent, and to this day she writes in terms of the warmest appreciation of his affectionate companionship.

He was very careful in the selection of his friends, bringing only one or two specially nice boys to stay at the Deanery. He does not indeed seem to have had many companions in the holidays. His brother,\* four years older than himself, was little with him. There seems to have been a systematic separation of the two boys, for they were at different houses at Eton and their holidays were spent with different uncles. However, Johnnie Selwyn was never at a loss for amusement : he gratified his love

\* Rev. W. Selwyn, Vicar of Bromfield, Salop.

of adventure by making perilous journeys outside the roof of Ely Cathedral, to which he obtained ready access as the Dean's nephew, and the river and its boats were a source of continual delight to him. His aunt Mrs. Thompson (on the death of the Dean Mrs. Peacocke married Dr. Thompson, the late master of Trinity College, Cambridge), tells of his devotion to his "dear boats," but adds that his readiness to leave them and nurse her in a time of illness was most touching. On another occasion, too, he was known to have given up a boating expedition and could nowhere be found, until, on search being made, he was discovered reading to a page-boy who was ill upstairs. This sympathy with suffering was one of his strongest characteristics : in Melanesia he would sit up night after night nursing the sick, and often gave up his own bed to a native boy who was ailing, though it might not improbably mean that the bedding could not be used by him again. Towards the close of his life, when lame and broken in health, it will be seen that he devoted much time to visiting hospitals and did all in his power to alleviate the pain and trouble of others.

But to return to his boyhood : he gives just one glimpse in a letter written to his mother many years afterwards, where he says that he accounts for his own learning being inferior to hers in depth and variety by the fact that *she* when a girl spent her evenings in reading with her aunt, while *he* spent

his in playing cribbage with his uncle. To sum up the impression he made upon his relations during these Ely holidays, nothing can be better than Mrs. Thompson's own words: "I dare not," she says, "begin about his lovely character, unselfish and cheerful under suffering, and thoughtful for every one."

At Eton he seems to have borne an excellent character with the authorities, for it is said that there was "not one complaint from either school-master or tutor," though he was never a particularly studious boy. His appearance at that date has been described by an old schoolfellow as that of a sturdy, square-shouldered boy with the countenance of a Lord Chancellor. There is no doubt that, whatever he took in hand, he was tremendously in earnest, and this shone out in his eager, determined face and sparkling eye. He was not a tidy boy: in fact all his life long he was noted for a certain carelessness of dress: a striking instance of this is given by Dr. Hornby, the Provost of Eton, who writes:

"I believe that I first saw John Selwyn on the Oxford towing-path in 1865 or 66, running with the University crew. He had come over from Cambridge to see his rivals, he being then, I think, stroke of the Cambridge eight. I well remember his appearance, which was very characteristic. He had borrowed a set of flannels from one of his friends at University College, Oxford, probably an old comrade in the Eton eight, and was running along very joyously in a University College 'blazer,' which was far too narrow for his



broad shoulders, and a pair of white flannel trousers which were much too long for his legs. It was impossible not to notice this as well as his bright, happy look, as of a man out for a good holiday and thoroughly enjoying himself."

In order to obtain a true notion of his Eton and Cambridge life the following valuable paper is inserted here—valuable both from its intrinsic interest, and also from the fact that it is penned by his chief school and college friend, Mr. R. A. Kinglake.

"My first meeting with John Richardson Selwyn was at John Hawtrey's, where we were together for about a year, Selwyn being at this time eleven years of age. John Hawtrey, a nephew of the Provost, was a Lower School Master. He took none but little boys, and as soon as they got into the fourth form they migrated to other houses. Selwyn went to Coleridge's, while I went to Evans'. Coleridge, who was then Lower Master, was soon after elected to a College fellowship, and Selwyn thereupon became a pupil of the Rev. E. Balston, who was also my tutor, and he came across the road from Coleridge's to Wm. Evans', where he and I struck up a friendship which was only severed by death. Selwyn did not live in the boys' house, but he occupied a room in the cottage where Mr. Evans lived, and where the Earl of Pembroke and one or two pet boys had rooms. . . . There was no dining hall at Eton to be compared to Evans'. It was hung round with old tapestry, and the walls decorated with coats of armour, &c. . . . At the high table the head boys sat in high-backed velvet chairs: it was a charming specimen of an old baronial hall. [What an impression this must have made on the small New Zealander!]

. . . . .

“Although he must have been separated from his parents at a very early age, the training and religious teaching he had received were indelibly stamped upon his mind, for at twelve years old he had a marvellous knowledge of the Scriptures . . . and could repeat by heart numberless texts and passages from the New Testament.

“When he was about fifteen years of age Mrs. Selwyn came from New Zealand on a visit, and stayed at Evans’. He went to London to meet his mother, but not having seen her for so many years did not recognise her. He had also grown out of her recollection, being by this time a broad-shouldered strong boy. However, it did not take long for them to be on the most affectionate terms, and I remember his expressing his joy at having his mother again with him, to whom he could tell all his inmost thoughts and hopes.

“Evans’ was a great house in those days. Four Lytteltons were there, Lord Cobham and his three brothers. The house was ruled and managed by the head boys . . . and this confidence was never misplaced. . . . Selwyn took to football and rowing, and was one of the best ‘long behinds’ at football I ever knew. Cool and calm at the moment of danger, never flurried, the house had a perfect defender for their goals, and with him as captain Evans’ won the football challenge cup, and became ‘cocks of college.’ . . . Selwyn, I think, played in the house cricket eleven. He rowed three in the house four, the remaining members of the crew being myself, S. E. Hicks, and the Rev. J. Trower. About this time he and I took up pair-oar rowing together, and we won the ‘Pulling’ with great ease. . . . Selwyn stood so high in football ‘choices’ that he might have been either captain of the field eleven, or captain of the ‘Wall,’ which was considered a better position. I was next to him in the ‘Wall choices’ and stood low in the field, so, for the honour of the dear old house, and thinking I should like to be captain of the ‘Wall,’ he accepted the captaincy of the field eleven, and I took the

‘ Wall,’ an act which was greatly appreciated by the boys in the house.

“He was a great favourite with the headmaster, Dr. Balston, who knew he had a boy of strong will and character at the top of the school, and one who would set an example of good to the younger and weaker boys, and he felt he could always rely on him if he should want his aid.

“Selwyn’s principal amusements were rowing and bathing. [He was a splendid swimmer, and on one occasion when at Scarborough during his holidays he swam so far out that a boatman rowed after him and fetched him back—a totally unnecessary proceeding. His “rescuer” proceeded to demand five shillings for what he had done, on which John Selwyn remarked: “I observe there are sharks in the sea even on the coast of England!”]

. . . . .

“Two of his very intimate friends at Eton were Stephen Fremantle, a brother of the present Lord Cottesloe, who won the Newcastle Scholarship and became a student of Christchurch and, unfortunately, died young after giving promise of great things; and Charles Bill, now member for one of the divisions of Staffordshire. [His love and admiration for Stephen Fremantle is mentioned in many of his letters, and in memory of him he called his eldest son “Stephen.”]

“I went to stay with him at Ely during the Easter holidays of 1862 to read for our matriculation examination at Trinity, Cambridge. Here we used to row every afternoon in a pair-oared outrigger. . . . On one occasion, in consequence of some inadvertence in the steering, we both lost our tempers, and each tried to row the other into the bank. The river was absolutely straight for over three-quarters of a mile, and after rowing the whole distance, and finding the boat still keeping her course in the centre of the stream, we burst out laughing. . . . Thus we gained perfect con-

fidence in one another, and when we went up to Cambridge we had no difficulty in winning the University Pairs, and afterwards the Silver Goblets at Henley.

“When Selwyn went to Trinity he ‘kept’ in Malcolm Street, and, as he preferred the freedom of lodgings, he remained there during the whole of his University career, and never had rooms in College. He rowed twice in the University crew (1864 and 1866). [He was stroke of the boat in the former year, and rowed two in the latter. Cambridge rowing was at a low ebb at the time, and he lost both races with Oxford.] As I was President of the C.U.B.C. and captain of 3rd Trinity, I resigned the latter post to him, thus repaying him for his generosity to me in our Eton football days.”

In 1866 John Selwyn made one of the great friendships of his life. This was with John Still,\* captain of the Caius College Rowing Club, who was a member of the Cambridge crew for four years, of which the first was 1866, thus just overlapping Selwyn. This friendship resulted in the two men working side by side for some years, first of all at Wolverhampton, and then in Melanesia.

One or two extracts from letters written during his Cambridge life may be added to this chapter, each one being interesting for some special reference or allusion.

Thus it is curious in view of after events, and his father's acceptance of the See of Lichfield, to find him writing to his mother on August 25, 1863, as follows :

\* Rector of Hockwold, Brandon.

“I went up to Uncle Charles’ for a cricket party on the 1st, and then to Lichfield to play in a match there. Did you go to Lichfield when you were in England? It has one of the most perfect Cathedrals in England, not excepting Ely, as it has been completely restored, and now they are putting in a reredos similar to that at Ely.”

Then again, writing to his mother on May 26, 1864, we find an allusion to his intention to take up the law as a profession. His uncle, Sir Charles Selwyn, was a notable judge, and his grandfather on his mother’s side (after whom he was named) was Sir John Richardson, of whom Lord Campbell in his “Life” (vol. i. p. 379) says: “He is not only a deep lawyer, but a very elegant scholar. I do not recollect any appointment which gave such universal satisfaction.” For these reasons, and also for much in his own nature which fitted him for the profession, it was always thought that he would go to the Bar. He writes as follows:

“The great thing with us now is Willie’s [his brother] ordination. He is regularly started in the world now, and I hope I shall get as good a one. I think a young clergyman’s life and a young lawyer’s are about as widely different as anything can be, though I suppose both have their own temptations, especially the latter. I think I shall try when I am



in London to get lodgings a little way out in the country, and then one will be able to get away from the eternal din ; and besides, it is very much better to put oneself out of the reach of temptation, as they say that men who have been working all day feel so inclined to knock about at night. However, you shall have my experiences when I have arrived at that state. At present I am only a Cambridge undergraduate who is not very likely to floor the Classical Tripos, unless he works very hard, which, what with boat-races, Prince of Wales coming to Cambridge, &c., does not seem very easy."

His lonely independence, owing to his great distance from his father and mother, comes out strongly in the following extract from a letter to his father written from Dresden, where he was reading with a party under the auspices of Mr. Richmond, on August 22, 1864.

"It is a very queer state of things, but at present I am almost entirely on my own (see the paucity of my English when I know no other word to express what I mean but) hook ; thereby meaning that hardly anybody, uncles, &c., knows how I am going on in the working way. . . . Everybody said that the Germans would be very rude, on account of the mess England had made by inserting her finger in the Danish war, but such is anything but the case.

I never met with more civility and kindness. My German is not so flourishing as it might be, but by a reckless disregard of all genders, and often of declensions also, I generally manage to make myself understood."

This pluck in the matter of unknown tongues was to stand him in good stead when he first went out to Melanesia. It is said that, while many a more timid man hesitated long before attempting to address the natives, as soon as John Selwyn knew twenty words of Mota, he preached a sermon *and made himself understood*.

His fears as to flooring the Classical Tripos were unfounded, for he came out safely in the 3rd Class in 1866, and then returned to New Zealand on a visit to his parents.

## CHAPTER II

### CHOICE OF A PROFESSION—ALREWAS

THIS visit to New Zealand proved the turning-point in his life. He went out with law-books in his box, and no other intention in his mind than that of preparing for the legal profession. Before the visit was over, an entirely different path of life opened out before him.

But this did not happen just at first. There were other things to occupy his mind for a time, such as the joy of being once more with his father and mother. He describes his arrival in a letter to Mrs. à Court-Repington, in which he says :

“My father’s house looks straight over the entrance to the harbour, and they saw us coming in, and before we anchored there was the well-known shovel hat in the stern sheets of a man-of-war’s boat, which soon transported me to my native land. . . . My old nurse appeared in most gorgeous attire to greet me, one item of which was a brooch containing



as a centrepiece a glass button which I wore at somebody's wedding in the year one! What do you think of that for fidelity?"

There is evidence, too, in the recollection of one who was at that time a little lad of nine, and lived at Auckland, N.Z., that law studies were at all events in John Selwyn's mind during the first part of his stay with his parents. This friend writes :

"He was supposed to be reading law, and used to spend much time in his shirt sleeves teaching a black-and-tan terrier tricks, much to my delight. He would take me out in his little 10-ton cutter in the harbour, and let me steer when all was plain sailing, or hang on to the sheet when we tacked. I can remember one day drifting off with the ebb tide with one scull in the dinghy, and finding that the most frantic exertions only made her spin round and drift away further from shore. He had his boots and coat off in a moment as he caught sight of the plight I was in, and swam out in his clothes to bring back the nine-year-old brat."

But two things soon happened which between them brought about a change of mind, and made him determine to take Holy Orders. The first of these was a long six weeks' expedition with his father to the district of the Waikato. This was a newly conquered part and the travellers had to undergo a series of hardships, such as sleeping in huts on fern beds, &c., which would have been

thought severe enough by most men, but which the father and son seem to have equally enjoyed.

In the course of his lectures on pastoral work in the Colonies and Mission Field, delivered in the University of Cambridge in 1896, Bishop John Selwyn thus described his experiences on this occasion :

“Just after I landed my father took me on a six-weeks’ tour. I was cook and bed-maker. It was mine to hoist up the little tent, to fill it with fern judiciously arranged, to cut the scanty rasher, and fit it between a cleft fern-stick ready for toasting, and, when he came, to do this deftly, so that all the grease might fall on the solitary biscuit which acted as dripping-pan. This was when we camped. Sometimes we slept at settlers’ houses, and never did men receive heartier welcome. Sometimes a soldiers’ mess welcomed us, and the guard turned out to salute a very travel-stained Bishop, but one who they all knew had gone through hardships and peril for their sakes.”

This journey gave John Selwyn an insight into the difficulties and self-sacrifice of his father’s work, and sowed the seed of a desire to be allowed to take his own share in the labour. Then came his knowledge of and devotion to Bishop Patteson, whose advice and example watered that seed and fostered

it until it bore fruit in a fixed determination to help his father, “not,” to quote Dr. Codrington’s\* words, “for his father’s sake only, but for the work’s sake.”

Full of this idea he returned to England with his father and mother when the former was summoned to the first Lambeth Conference in 1867. Then came another change. The Bishop of New Zealand was with great difficulty persuaded to accept, at the request of the Queen, the vacant Bishopric of Lichfield, and John Selwyn had to make up his mind to give up for a time his missionary aspirations and help his father to settle into his new diocese, first, however, going back with him for a hurried visit to New Zealand to settle up affairs there.

On their return to Lichfield he seems to have spent his time partly as his father’s secretary, partly in attending theological lectures at Cambridge, and latterly, for a few months before his ordination to the curacy of Alrewas, in working as a layman in that parish.

This period was no doubt a time of considerable trial. He had always been a thoroughly *good* fellow, but he was endowed with immense spirits and was exceptionally boyish and unconventional in his ways, so that, while the prospect of being a clergyman was attractive enough to the strongly marked serious

\* Dr. Codrington was Head of the Melanesian Mission after the death of Bishop Patteson.

side of his character, yet it seemed to him to require so great a change in his mode of life that, as appears in many of his letters at this date, it caused him grave apprehension. However, he was ordained deacon by his father on Trinity Sunday 1869, and went to work at Alrewas under the Rev. W. H. Walsh, an old friend of the family. There is a short account of his ordination in a letter to a friend, which is worth quoting for its simplicity. He says:

“I ought to have thanked you before for your delightful little ‘George Herbert.’ I read some of him while I was waiting in the morning to go to church, and wondered whether it was possible to reach such a standard. The service was delightful on Sunday. My father could hardly say anything when I came up, and, of course, it was the most solemn moment I have ever passed. I only hope all the love and kind wishes that have been sent me may end in something, but it seems very hard not to turn back again to one’s old ways.”

It may be as well to describe his personal appearance at this time, as it does not appear to have altered much until he became broken in health towards the end of his life. He is described as a man of strong physical frame and eyes full of fire and enthusiasm; not tall but very muscular, his head well set on his shoulders; the sort of man to

have near one in a crowd ; almost boyish in manner, very merry and cheerful, and always a most welcome guest to children. Many people (especially strangers) saw in him a strong resemblance to the great Napoleon. His exact height was 5 ft.  $7\frac{3}{4}$  in. as may be gathered from an extract from a letter to his eldest daughter written from Norfolk Island in 1888 : he pretends to be horrified at having so tall a daughter and says :

“I see you are 5 ft.  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in.—only an inch below me !!! Wretch ! Stop !”

As would be supposed from his natural tastes he devoted a great deal of attention to the children in the parish of Alrewas, going much to the school, joining in the cricket and football, and teaching the village lads to swim. Many acts of kindness are still recorded of his brief stay in that place, such as helping an old woman to take in her coals, leaving his own dinner to carry some to a sick neighbour, taking medicine late at night from the doctor to a distant hamlet, and going night and morning for many weeks to carry an infirm old man up and down stairs. Some neighbours in the county asked him frequently to dinner, and were almost vexed at his constant excuses. After he left they found out that his real reason was his reluctance to miss his attendance on this old paralytic. By these



and such-like characteristic actions, as well as by his absolute lack of ecclesiastical priggishness, he became in a short time deeply endeared to the people among whom he was first called to work.

One other matter must here be mentioned. There was, staying with the Walshes, a young lady, an orphan, by name Miss Clara Innes, to whom John Selwyn became engaged shortly after he left Alrewas for Wolverhampton, and who was the faithful and loving partner of his first missionary labours. He thus describes his engagement :

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

*“WOLVERHAMPTON, July 7, 1871.*

“What will you say to me for having been such a bad correspondent? . . . One reason is that I have had a great many letters to write to another lady, who is very *exigeante* and never lets me off! All which means that at last I have broken the spell, and am really engaged. The young damsel is one Clara Innes, who has been living for some time with my old vicar at Alrewas, where I got to know her very well. She filled my place when I left, and used to do great things in the parish which roused my admiration, and this grew into love which has deepened every minute since we have been engaged, and I think we are as happy in each other as any two people in the world. She is very tall [she was

exactly his own height], fairly good looking, and very bright and merry, so we mean to be a most jovial couple."

This letter has been quoted a little out of place here, because it throws a sidelight upon the Alrewas life, and also because it affords an opportunity of saying a word, thus early, on a subject of great interest in studying the life of Bishop John Selwyn. From first to last he owed nearly everything to the beneficent influence of women. It is true that the example of his father and of Bishop Patteson inspired him to a great degree, but there was not any very close intimacy, and the few great friends whom he possessed among *menkind*, such as Mr. Charles Bill and the Rev. John Still, had nothing like the influence over him that several women acquired. When separated so widely as a boy from his parents he depended in some measure for sympathy on his aunt, Mrs. Peacocke, but far more on a saintly and lovable cousin who enjoyed his closest confidence, and to whom, had she lived, he would in all probability have been married. Then there were one or two married ladies who were devoted to his interests and with whom he carried on an immense correspondence. The sister of the cousin above mentioned was one of these, as also was Mrs. à Court-Repington, an aunt of Lord Pembroke, with whom John Selwyn was in the same house at

Eton. That he deeply valued these friendships is plain from the following extracts :

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

“ALREWAS, *Jan. 21, 1870.*

“Did you see an article in the *Saturday* on friendship? I got in such a rage with it, especially when it talked about women’s friendship for men. It rather ignored and sneered at the idea, while *I* think that a good married woman friend is the very best thing a man, and especially a young one, can have. I have got about three, and they do one more good than anything else. So, great was my wrath at the article.”

Then again, just before he started for Melanesia in January 1873, he wrote :

“I have two memories to help me on in the work, all summed up in one line of a hymn, ‘Martyrs brave and patient saints’—Bishop Patteson the one and dear R—— the other.”

He is here referring to the cousin who died, and whose memory was with him all through his life ; thus in 1890 he says :

“How much I learnt from R—— and you all of the beauty and helpfulness of women ! It is a very



good faith for a youngster to get hold of, and I have never found it fail yet. Of course I have met foolish and extravagant and some wicked women, but on the whole I have met and cared for so many good ones that my faith has never wavered, and I have been helped and comforted by them more than I can say."

And then what can be said of his close affection for his mother and her wonderful influence over him? Only that to read the long and frequent letters to her with which he supplemented his diary is a revelation of an intercourse between mother and son, both spiritual and otherwise, such as is not commonly conceived possible.

## CHAPTER III

### ST. GEORGE'S, WOLVERHAMPTON—TRIP TO AMERICA—DEATH OF BISHOP PATTESON

WHEN John Selwyn had been some eighteen months at Alrewas his father found him a fresh sphere for his energies. A large and important town parish, that of St. George's, Wolverhampton, had got into a considerable state of disorder through a want of a good understanding between the people and the Vicar, who was at that time given leave of absence by the Bishop. Here seemed an admirable opportunity for testing what there might be in his son, and at the same time for placing some one in the parish upon whom he, as Bishop, could thoroughly depend. So, reluctantly enough, John Selwyn had to go. He thus writes of the matter :

*To MRS. A COURT-REPIGTON.*

“ALREWAS [*end of 1870?*].

“I dare say you have heard of the row going on

at St. George's, Wolverhampton. Well, the incumbent is going on leave of absence, and my father, *more suo*, is packing me off thither. It is an awful responsibility, and one that I would not undertake were I not *told* to go. You will think of me sometimes and pray that I may have the spirit of counsel and of peace."

He went there on January 2, 1871, and certainly did not find a very pleasant state of things, the one redeeming feature being the presence of the Rev. F. E. Waters, now Vicar of Holy Trinity, Hanley, who had just been ordained Curate of the parish, and who became his lifelong friend.

Writing to his mother four days after his arrival he thus describes what he found :

"I am quite settled down now, though I feel somewhat moped and lonely at times without a single soul one cares very much about except ——

"Still, I think things might be a good deal worse than they are. The parish certainly is in an awful mess. The schools at the upper end are going to the dogs, and at the lower end they are not much better. This last place is where the Mission Church is, and I have received rather a facer to-night, as I meant to have an Epiphany service there this evening. Waters went to see about it, and the man told him he didn't dare open it without an order from

the Committee. Now this Committee consists of a good many of the malcontents who have paid their guineas, and are therefore members according to the terms of the deed. To-night they have said that they cannot let me have the school without a meeting of the Committee. I have quietly acquiesced, and they will know better than to make such a false step as to stop me altogether. Still it is a bore just as things are at present, as I looked on that as my working ground, and it may bring me into collision with them, which is just what I want to avoid. I dare say there will be no fuss however, so, as you say, I will not take trouble at interest. There are many rays of hope, though, going about. . . ."

Again, writing to a cousin on January 9, 1871, he says :

"What a change this is ! . . . To be on one's guard for everything one says or does, and to be going on in a sort of armed neutrality with no end of foes outside, ready to take advantage of a slip. That is about one's state at St. George's just now. Perhaps it will get better soon."

*To MRS. A COURT-REPIGTON.*

"ST. GEORGE'S, WOLVERHAMPTON, *Feb.* 27, 1871.

"This is a queer life altogether, as one has to be greatly on one's Ps and Qs. The principal opposing

churchwarden is a pawnbroker with whom I discuss questions of theology. Then I have another man who wants to preach in a licensed schoolroom in the parish, and I won't let him. Hence a small row. But I think that is smoothing down."

It was certainly no slight test to which the Bishop had put his son, and it must have been no small satisfaction to him to find how amply his trust in that son's capabilities was justified. The Rev. F. E. Waters gives the clue to the success which met John Selwyn's efforts to bring about a better state of things. He says:

"I quite well remember the bright, cheery greeting I received from my new chief at his first coming, and all the time he stayed at St. George's I found him a kind friend, a very inspiring leader, and a noble example. He was from the first full of faith, hope, and charity. He had a most lovable and winsome way, and soon began to win back the confidence and respect that had been lost. If I were to be asked what were his chief characteristics I should say *cheerfulness and prayerfulness*. I remember his telling me when a very tiresome meeting was over, where bitter things had been said and angry speeches made: 'I was praying all the while —— was speaking,' and the meeting which began so badly broke up quite peacefully."

Any one who has been to Wolverhampton and wandered even a few yards from the station will have noticed the specially rough appearance of the lads who loiter about on the look out for a job. It

was this element that Selwyn managed chiefly to attract to himself by his mixture of manliness and affection, qualities which when found in combination few boys can resist. The first whom he won were sent out to bring in others, and so his adherents increased in numbers. He used to preach in the streets, and these lads formed his bodyguard. He had one special champion by name "Tom," of whom it is told that on one occasion he was fighting for the fourth or fifth time another lad who had insulted Mr. Selwyn. Unfortunately a policeman appeared on the scene and carried off the coats of the combatants, and no doubt Tom would have had to appear before the magistrates if Mr. Selwyn had not turned up in the nick of time and begged him off.

So things went on getting day by day smoother and more satisfactory for the six months during which he was curate in charge of the parish. Then a change in his position occurred, as will be gathered from the following letters to Mr. Waters, who was away on his holiday.

"WOLVERHAMPTON, *Aug.* 8, 1871.

"MY DEAR WATERS,

"I have two very good pieces of news for you : 1. That the Bishop has offered Mr. —— [the vicar of St. George's] a living. He goes to see it to-morrow, and it is almost certain that he will take it. If he does (this is *entre nous*) the Bishop



will leave me here, and we shall I think get on famously, as the people seem to want me to stay, and H—— told me the other day that he thought it was the best thing that could be done. This from what he had heard.

“And now comes the to me still better news that Still, my greatest friend, has determined to give up the curacy he was going to in Dorsetshire, and will come here. This will be splendid, as he is a man one can thoroughly trust, and as good a fellow as ever breathed. I trust, therefore, that this winter we shall be able to show the town what the young ones can do.

“Believe me,

“Yours very truly,

“J. R. SELWYN.”

*To the SAME.*

“WOLVERHAMPTON, Aug. 14, 1871.

“Things go on flourishingly here, and I think everybody is glad I am going to stay. Forty boys to-night. I am going to take them to Sandwell on Saturday. There is no small-pox yet.”

This last sentence was ominous. It was not very long before a terrible scourge of this disease visited St. George's, and indeed the whole town of Wolverhampton. A general small-pox hospital was opened

in John Selwyn's parish, and with that characteristic energy and devotion which marked his work and his play he threw himself heart and soul into the heavy, anxious, and often nauseous work of visiting and nursing the sufferers. It was an example of what his friend Mr. Charles Bill describes as the motto of Selwyn's life—viz., "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." In subsequent letters he frequently referred to this severe experience. Thus, writing to the Rev. F. E. Waters from on board ship off the Solomon Islands in 1876 he says :

"You and I know from old experience at St. George's how out of weakness we are made strong, and how God answers prayer. . . . I wonder if you ever feel the good of that sharp time we had together? I do often and often, if only to teach me faith and prayer."

One of the patients whom he nursed was a drover, a very rough fellow and a leader of unbelief. This man one day said to Mr. Selwyn, "Parsons are no different to any one else, only for their coat." Off came Selwyn's coat in a moment, and he offered to change. That man became a staunch friend.

The staff at St. George's at this time consisted of J. R. Selwyn, John Still, and F. E. Waters. At a parish meeting the vicar playfully said, "Now that



we have got into *Still Waters*, everything will go smoothly I am sure." This soon became a stock joke all over Wolverhampton.

In September 1871 he was given the great pleasure of accompanying his father to America, the Bishop of Lichfield having been invited to attend the Convention of American Bishops at Baltimore. Of this expedition John Selwyn's diary is in existence, and a most amusing book it is. In it he tells of their journey to the above-named city :

"The train was full of bishops, who speedily came crowding round to bid us welcome. The heartiness was extreme, but there were sundry shocks to be undergone even in the midst of the greatest cordiality. A bishop in a white coat and pot hat is startling to one's English notions, but one soon learnt to forget that in one's admiration of the man who had bearded Brigham Young in his very stronghold at Salt Lake City, and had laid the material foundations of his Church there so deep that the Saints themselves said, 'These Gentiles mean to stop.'"

Then comes an account of their introduction to the Convention :

"We stood on the dais and then the President proceeded to introduce us *seriatim* to the Con-

vention, and, what was worse, we had *seriatim* to make speeches. I do not think we disgraced ourselves, but it was trying. . . . After the ceremony was over up jumped a member and said, 'Mr. President, I propose that the House now take a recess of twenty minutes for the purpose of shaking our distinguished visitors by the hand.' 'Seconded,' said some one, and resolved *nem. con.* Thereupon we had to go down the centre aisle shaking hands vigorously as we went. Special seats were then assigned us, and the synod went on."

Amongst other experiences he went to hear Ward Beecher. He thus describes what he saw :

"I got a good place on the platform steps close to Ward Beecher himself. He was sitting in an arm-chair with a table by his side on which was a vase of flowers, and on the other side there was another vase full of exotics. . . . The choir were singing an anthem when we got in to which the people sat and listened with apparent contentment. When this was over Ward Beecher read a Psalm, the people still sitting. Then followed a hymn. . . . Then there was an extempore prayer. I suppose an extempore prayer by Ward Beecher is as good a thing of its kind as one wants to hear, but the effect on me was to make me more than ever contented with the simplicity and beauty of our own Prayer-book."

After this follows a long description of Ward Beecher's sermon on Rachel, in which he contrasted Esau and Jacob, saying that the "diplomatic skill" of the latter made him the best on whom "to organise," and, therefore, most fitted for God's purpose. He seems to have tried to raise a laugh here and there in his sermon by unworthy means, as when he spoke of the love which Rachel inspired as being unaccountable, "but then," said he, "I am not Jacob."

One excellent story is told by John Selwyn in this diary :

"A party of settlers were met going to the back-woods. The man who met them asked their various occupations, and was told that some were to build the houses, some to clear the ground, &c. 'And pray what is that old gentleman going to do?' pointing to a very old man who accompanied the party. 'Oh! that is my father,' was the answer, 'I am going to start the cemetery with him.'"

On the voyage back to England which began on November 19, his love of sailors and wish to help them is recorded :

"I have discovered a way of getting at the sailors, and since Sunday, when I had service with them in the dog watch, have been there [fore-castle?] every evening to give them a series of

readings. They respond most heartily and always ask me to come again, and are most thoughtful about my comfort. First they get a cloth to spread on the table, and a stool for me to sit on, then a candlestick for my candle, and to-night a decanter and some water as I was hoarse. Poor fellows, I think 'one could do them some good if the voyage were longer. I have enjoyed the hour and a half 'forward' very much."

Thus ended a two months' holiday of great enjoyment, and it may be also of some influence on his future, for it must have moved him greatly to witness the reception given to his father by the American Church, not so much as an English Bishop, as the great *Missionary* of the English Church.

But a terrible blow awaited the travellers on their return in the news of the death of Bishop Patteson.

*To MRS. A COURT-REPIGTON.*

"WOLVERHAMPTON [*end of 1871 ?*].

"It was a terrible blow to us to come back to the news of Bishop Patteson's death. We have had no particulars yet, and rather dread them just now. We only know the fact, and that is so glorious that one is afraid of anything to make it harrowing. It

is certainly a carrying out of Solon's adage that no one could be called happy till he died. There was a chance of his health failing, when he would have had to have given up, but now he is spared that and has died in the zenith of his usefulness, having just seen enough of the fruit of his labours to cheer him on (he had baptized eighty-four children on one island with a fair certainty of their being brought up Christians), and without a man to throw a hard word at him. Certainly one hardly ever read of a more blameless life or a more noble death."

John Selwyn and his friend John Still had more than once discussed the idea of going out somewhere together as missionaries. The death of Bishop Patteson brought things to a crisis, and, although his engagement to Miss Innes had altered his circumstances, yet he went to his father and offered, if he thought well, to give himself to the work in Melanesia. The following letters tell the story :

*To MRS. À COURT-REPINGTON from MRS. SELWYN.*

*"WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL, Feb. 13, 1872.*

"It is not improbable that my dear Johnnie may carry on this work [in Melanesia]. He is ready, and there seems a fitness of things in his father's son being willing to come forward if necessary. It is not a settled and certain thing in any way but in the minds of himself and his wife, for it depends on certain contingencies at present. He told his bride-elect a

week before the wedding, and she said she could only answer in the words of Ruth, which pleased us and augurs well. Then came his wedding and a very bright sojourn at the Isle of Wight, and now they are settled at St. George's, Wolverhampton with their many thousands, and their brave young hearts to work for them. It will be a pang when it comes, but we are old. . . . I shall not have misled you, shall I? about Johnnie. There is no thought of his succeeding Bishop Patteson. Happily he is too young for that. No one can fill that place, though I hope some one may be found to take it up. . . ."

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

"ST. GEORGE'S VICARAGE, WOLVERHAMPTON,  
" *March 11, 1872.*

"MY DEAR MRS. A COURT,

". . . Of course I had thought something about it when the news first came home, but the thought went out of my head and I felt nearly convinced that I ought to stay where I was. But on the Thursday before I was married I went over to Lichfield to see Miss Yonge, who is going to write Bishop Patteson's memoir, and Fanny Patteson, and there I read all the letters that had come home on the subject, and, as I read, it all seemed to surge over me that I ought to go, and for these reasons: (1) It was my father's work, his son in the faith had died in it. Who then so fit as his son in the flesh to go on with it? (2) There was a doubt about Codrington staying, and, if he didn't stay, it seemed



likely that the mission would go into another groove which wouldn't suit it so well. If then Codrington knew that one or two men were coming out from England whom he knew, there would be a chance of his going on and thus carrying on the work in its integrity. Then my name would be a help, especially in the Australian Colonies; and lastly, Jack Still, the dearest man friend I have, would, I knew, go with me, and he would be such a gain to any work that I felt the chance ought not to be thrown away. So with these thoughts I knelt down and prayed that I might be guided aright, and the thought only came the stronger. Then I had a long talk with my mother, and she, poor thing, told me with tears in her eyes that she thought it was right. 'You know, Johnnie, I am arguing against myself, but I think it is right.' Then I went out to Alrewas to preach, and on the counter of the Post Office wrote a line to C., telling her what I had done, and saying that, as this was quite a new idea, she ought to know of it before she tied herself down to me for life, and that life meaning *transportation* to New Zealand. Of course she answered as I expected, but still I thought it right to let her know. Then when I came home in the evening I spoke to my father. He was, I think, very glad, but said it depends on a variety of circumstances, and the chief of these was, and is, whether Codrington, who has been with Bishop Patteson some years, will stay at

the head of the mission. If he does, as I have said, all will go well.

. . . . .

“God has given me grace to pull the parish together, but, much as I love the place and the people, still I do think that many a man could now work there better than I, and though I do not feel myself at all fit for the work out there—mentally—yet I believe my physical training and my delight in ships, &c., will stand me in good stead. So you must not think that I have done this wantonly, or without due consideration, or without a full knowledge of all that it entails. Still enters into it all most thoroughly, and he and I have many a laugh over the details of the business, however serious the whole of it may be. We have already arranged our respective shares of the work, he as purser, I as first mate. My father, too, is very amusing in the exceedingly commonplace view he takes of it all. Still went in to see him, and rather expected some sympathy, but all he got was, ‘Well, you have spoilt another little plan of mine. I wanted you to be barge missionary on the canals.’

. . . . .

“Ever yours aff.

“J. R. S.”

He was, however, to work for nearly another year at Wolverhampton, a period during which his labours



were aided and his life brightened by his wife, to whom he was married in January 1872. He said that they meant to be a jovial couple, and St. George's is reported to have been for that year the merriest vicarage in England, as it was also the scene of some of the hardest work. How thorough that work was on the part of both may be gathered from a letter from Mrs. Selwyn (his mother) to Mrs. à Court-Repington, written after the missionary party had sailed for Melanesia.

“THE PALACE, LICHFIELD, *April 2, 1873.*

“I have just come back from a week at Wolverhampton, where the Bishop has been confirming, and where I wished to go to see Johnnie's people and to tell him of them. I could never have thought that that dingy town would have such a halo round it as now it has in my eyes. Yet it was sad enough in some ways, and how I missed on arriving there the bright face and loving looks that always awaited me at the station! But these I do not expect to see again in the flesh. I may as well dwell on the bright part, and there was a great deal that was very bright to me in the warm remembrance in which they are both held, and the great love shown for Johnnie. The common form of its expression was in pity for the present incumbent in coming after one whose like the people do not expect to see again. The whole staff, too, was young and full of energy, I hope, and it seems to have had a great effect on the parishioners, of which perhaps they were hardly aware till they lost the cause. I went to all the schools, and to a mothers' meeting. Clara's night school came to see me, and I went to Johnnie's 'Arabs,' a wild set of boys he gathered together in the course of open-air services, who have been kept

together since by a devoted satellite of Johnnie's. The grimy lads listened eagerly to the account of the service at Lambeth on Sunday and of the going on Monday, and they showed their zeal in Melanesia by having collected since Johnnie went, in pennies and halfpennies, more than twelve pounds. It pleased me to find how much Clara was cared for by her scholars and their teachers who came daily to see me."

It is plain how great a hold he had on the affections of his parishioners, especially of the lads, who "could not resist him," and also how he bound them not only to himself but also to God and to the Church. All this must have made the wrench harder. Dr. Codrington says :

"The news of Bishop Patteson's death came to John Selwyn as a call to devote himself to the Melanesian Mission. He gave up (not to speak of his prospects in the Church) his place by his father's side in the manifold enterprises and undertakings which were opening among the vast and busy population of the Diocese : he gave up the intercourse with his parents, so delightful to a most affectionate son who had been so long separated from them : he gave up the home of married life into which he had just settled, the intercourse with his many friends, and the many attractions and interests of English life."

No small things these for a man of John Selwyn's temperament to sacrifice. But he made the offering not only cheerfully and with both hands, as his generous nature ever prompted him to do, but deliberately and prayerfully. Mr. John Still remembers how, when it was settled and they were

one day going upstairs together, Selwyn turned to him and said, "I say, old fellow, we must have a prayer about this," and drew him into his room.

As against the sacrifice must be put the attraction of an adventurous life—the boy who made perilous excursions on the roof of Ely Cathedral was nothing loth to extend his adventures to the islands of Melanesia—his love of a seafaring life, and, last but not least, the beautiful and trustful readiness of his young wife to share with him whatever of hardship or banishment might fall to his lot.

So it was that after a dedicatory service in Lambeth Chapel, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Selwyn, with a little daughter born at Lichfield shortly before, and the Rev. John Still, sailed in the *Dunbar Castle* for Melanesia in the middle of February 1873. His mother thus describes the departure :

*To* MRS. A COURT-REPIGTON.

"THE LOLLARD'S TOWER, LAMBETH, *Feb.* 17, 1873.

"Monday was a day of intensity. The Bishop went down the river (with the nursery department !) in the ship, and we followed by train to Gravesend. By that time everything was comfortably in order in both cabins. Then came the parting prayers and the farewells, just where eighteen years ago Johnnie had left us to go to Eton when we sailed for New Zealand."

## CHAPTER IV

### ARRIVAL IN MELANESIA—NORFOLK ISLAND, ETC.

THE voyage out in the *Dunbar Castle* was almost entirely lacking in incident. A letter written by John Selwyn towards the end thus describes it :

“We have had the most utterly uneventful voyage, even as voyages go. Not spoken one single ship—at least we did speak one wretched barque we passed going the same way as ourselves—have had one stiff blow last Sunday, caught three sharks, and lost the cat overboard. *Voilà tout !*”

A good deal of time on board was given by Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn and Mr. Still to the study of “Mota”—the language of one of the islands in Melanesia, and the recognised tongue of the Mission work. The island of Mota is one of the smallest of the Banks Islands group, and it was in the years 1860, '61, and '62, that openings began first to be given there for Mission work. Bishop Patteson

took a party of some sixteen to Lifu, an island in the Loyalty group, and lived with them there. Of these the greater number belonged to Banks Islands, and in 1863 four of them, all from Mota, were christened. Thus the Mota language gradually became the one generally in use in the Mission. When it is known that almost every small island had its own language, and many of them more than one, it is obvious that some choice had to be made, and it seems natural from the above circumstances that Mota should have been selected.

The learning of a new language was a severe ordeal to John Selwyn. He refers often in the course of letters to the want of application to work both at Eton and Cambridge, which had made it difficult to him to study one subject for long together. He also laments his weakness in composition, which his correspondence shows was never entirely overcome, for, while possessing the power of graphic description and of making his meaning perfectly clear, his grammar often left much to be desired, and he had some curious tricks such as the use of capital letters before substantives and sometimes before adjectives in an absolutely indiscriminate manner. He also had a habit of using a full stop to supply the place of a comma or semicolon, and marks of interjection or interrogation he seldom used at all. These are small things, but they point to a certain inaccuracy of detail which must have



made the acquisition of a new language much more difficult.

The little daughter proved an immense source of amusement during the voyage, and he gives several pretty pictures of which "baby" is the centre. Space must be found for one :

"Babs now enters our cabin in a triumphant procession at 10 P.M. and is wedged in on the arms of the arm-chair between the table and the wall, so that the bassinette cannot slip, and then lashed in as a further precaution. The young damsel is then the greatest fun possible. She seems utterly regardless of cold, and when one wakes about seven the chances are one sees two little feet sticking straight up out of the cradle, and triumphant crows proceeding out of the same."

There was, however, one grave drawback to what would have been to one with his love of the sea an immensely enjoyable time. He was attacked by severe rheumatism which abated slightly for a time but came on again with increased virulence when on board the *Hero*, by which ship he proceeded from Australia to New Zealand. This upset all plans. Mr. Codrington, head of the Melanesian Mission, was to have met them, and to have taken him and Mr. Still on a voyage to the Islands. How this arrangement was upset is described in the following letters.

*From* REV. JOHN STILL *to* C. BILL, ESQ.

“AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, *June 3, 1873.*

“Billy [Selwyn’s nickname at Cambridge] has been very bad indeed, quite unable to move, but is now better and fast recovering. His right hand is bad, so he is writing by deputy.”

*To* REV. F. E. WATERS.

“AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, *June 16, 1873.*

“I dare say you will have heard ere this reaches you of our safe arrival in Sydney. . . .

“I found letters waiting to say that Mr. Codrington was coming down to Auckland on or about the last day of May, and then wanted to take Still and me a tour of all the Islands, so that we might get acquainted with our work. . . .

“After a hard fight with Mrs. Selwyn’s brother [who apparently wished them both to stay longer] we effected a compromise, which was that she should stay, and Still and I go, and I was then to come back to Sydney for her. *L’homme propose mais Dieu dispose.* My rheumatism, which had been rather bad on board the *Dunbar Castle*, came on frightfully in the *Hero*, so badly that Jack had to carry me about, and I had nearly a week’s bed when I came here. Thank God I am nearly well now, but the doctor won’t hear of my going this trip, as he says it

might make it chronic ; so Jack will go without me. You may imagine what a disappointment this is to me, as we have so long run in couples.

“ However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Dudley, one of our old mission clergy and now an incumbent in the town, has developed a clergyman’s throat, so I am going to take his duty and he is going off to get well.

“ Jack and I often talk of you and the old Wolverhampton days, and tell our friends how light we used to be on Sunday evenings.”

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

“ AUCKLAND, *July 30, 1873.*

“ I got very rheumatic on board, how and why I know not, but it made life a great burden, and me very cross, which was not as it should be. . . .

“ Still and I departed by the *Hero*, and the next evening I was laid up again with very bad rheumatism which utterly crippled me for the rest of the voyage, and I had to lie night and day in the saloon, as getting into my berth was out of the question. Dear old Still used to carry me about like a child, and I made my entrance into Auckland on men’s shoulders.”

It must have been a severe blow to arrive on



the scene of his labours a cripple. For nearly two years he had been looking forward to the time when he should find himself in the region where his father did his great work, and where he hoped to be allowed to carry that work on. He had inherited many traits of character from that father, but he was fully conscious of many things in which he could scarcely hope to emulate him. He had much of his father's determination, a full measure of his father's indomitable courage, a great deal of his resourcefulness under difficult circumstances both external and spiritual, and a spice of his father's temper. On the other hand, he fell short in learning, and to some extent in power of organisation, but, as compensation, he had a sweetness of disposition and an eagerness to make amends which were all his own.

Feeling then, fully, his intellectual inferiority to his father, it was not unnatural that he should rely greatly on his physical powers, all of which had been trained and developed by his athletic life at Eton and Cambridge. It was, therefore, a specially severe ordeal to be carried as an invalid on to the shores of New Zealand. No doubt, looking at the matter afterwards in his own spirit of prayerfulness, he would have seen the hand of God teaching him that "neither delighteth He in any man's strength."

Sir William Martin, the first Chief Justice of New Zealand, and a co-fellow of St. John's with Bishop

George Augustus Selwyn, lived at Auckland. He was a great Maori scholar and a warm patron of the Mission, and in his house John Selwyn was for a while laid up. The time was not however wasted, for the two or three months' delay which were ordered by the doctor were spent partly in taking charge of the parish of Mr. Dudley (now Archdeacon) who was away in bad health, and partly in making friends with as many of the neighbours as possible, whereby fresh interest in the Melanesian Mission was aroused and fresh help ensured through the attractive personality of himself and Mrs. Selwyn.

By the beginning of October he was well enough to start, and the middle of that month found him settled in Norfolk Island. This is the headquarters of the Melanesian Mission, and here is situated the St. Barnabas Station and the College for native boys who are brought there from the other islands by the Mission vessel in her frequent voyages. The Station (by which is meant the group of Mission buildings) stands about three miles inland from the town or village where the Pitcairn islanders were allowed to settle in the old convict prison buildings.

Besides Dr. Codrington, the Selwyns found on arriving at Norfolk Island two other staunch workers, both married men — viz., the Rev. John Palmer and the Rev. Charles Bice. The latter of

these came from St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and joined the Mission in 1866. He remained for twenty years one of the most active members of the staff, and latterly had charge of the New Hebrides district. Mrs. Bice came out just before the Selwyns, and was one of the two ladies they found in the Mission, the other being Mrs. Palmer, the first lady who ever came to Norfolk Island. The Rev. John Palmer had been labouring in the Mission since 1863, and has been there ever since, steadily devoted to its service, for which he has done an unequalled work. He is now Archdeacon. Mrs. Palmer was the first to begin the system of the ladies taking charge of the unmarried girls, an example followed by Mrs. John Selwyn on her arrival. In many other ways too her influence was greatly felt. The ladies' society was very small, and, naturally enough, difficulties occurred from time to time. The veneration felt for Mrs. Palmer enabled her to do much towards smoothing these away, and promoting that harmony without which life at Norfolk Island would have been almost impossible.

These were the main fellow workers who greeted Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn and who did so much to make their life at St. Barnabas' a happy one. The day of their landing at the Island was a memorable one in the history of their lives. Here is John Selwyn's own description of his first impressions :

“NORFOLK ISLAND, Oct. 19, 1873, *Sunday*.

“MY DEAREST FATHER AND MOTHER,

“Here we are at last, and you may imagine the thankfulness with which we landed all safe and well, with bright sunlight and smooth water to greet us, and a very hearty welcome from all here. It is one of those occasions which seem to bring out all the deep humbling feelings of a man’s heart, and they were very real and, I trust, fervent prayers which we sent up to-night at the evening service. It was all Mota, which we could follow fairly with our prayer-books before us, but it is the custom here to read the Collect for the day in English, and so we suddenly heard the very prayer we wanted to say coming in the midst of the strange language like an oasis, seeming even more beautiful than it really is from the familiarity in the midst of so much that was unfamiliar. “O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee.” We could not have a better motto than that to begin our work with, and I know you will pray more earnestly for us that His Holy Spirit will in all things direct and rule our hearts. . . .

“The people who rowed us ashore were full of recollections of you, and of tender inquiries about you. I hope your name will be a help to me in helping them. Good-night and God bless you both. Clara sends her dearest love, but is too tired to write.

Dear little Pearlie [the baby] takes most kindly to her new quarters, and sends her love to you. I don't think the photographs give any idea of the place at all. It is much better kept than they make it look. Indeed, going down the hill from the avenue into the place, one would think one was going into a small and rather well-looking English village. . . . Our little house stands on the left-hand side. They all say it is a bad situation, as it is exposed to the prevailing wind, and it is not very grand, being like nothing so much as the inside of a workbox. . . . Clara and I are charmed with the place altogether, and think we shall like it all very much. I have been proving my strength by much carting and lifting boxes, and find I am nearly quite as strong as I was, which is a great comfort. . . . Good-bye, my dearest father and mother,

“Ever your affectionate son,

“J. R. SELWYN.”

As may easily be imagined it did not take him long to get to work. He threw himself heart and soul into the work of the Mission and of the school, delighting especially in taking his share in the outdoor manual labour which formed an important part of each day's duties. The following two letters give his early impressions of the place and also of the native boys and girls who were being trained at St. Barnabas':



*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

*"NORFOLK ISLAND, January 13, 1874.*

. . . . .

"You must imagine our mission station as lying on the slope of a hill about three miles from the settlement. The main road to nowhere runs right through the station, and as you come down the hill you see what looks very like an English village green. At the far end of it is a cart-shed, cowyard, barn, &c., looking very homey, and on the right lie the main buildings of the Mission ; *e.g.*, chapel and house attached, hall and kitchen, carpenter's shop and two houses where the bachelors reside and look after the boys. We married folk live further afield in little houses of our own.

. . . . .

"It is marvellous how like a boy, say up to twelve or thirteen, from the Solomon Islands is to a boy from Belgravia. In point of adaptability to circumstances I should be inclined to give the palm to the former, but *qua* pickle and jokes, &c. &c., all that constitute small boy nature, even to tears in their trousers on all occasions, &c. &c., I don't think there is a pin to choose. Darwin and Co. may say what they like, but my fellows who can't take four from five are not at all different from two of my greatest friends at Eton and Cambridge, one

of whom was asked what a stalactite would melt in three hours if it melted an inch in two, and fled at the bare word ; and the other learnt his Euclid by heart, signs and all, from sheer inability to comprehend it. I say it is all nonsense to say that these fellows are not capable of higher training because they are dull at first, or to compare them with those who have had all the weight of thousands of years of at least partial civilisation to start with, and whose common everyday facts would be great discoveries to these fellows. . . .”

*To A COUSIN.*

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *Jan. 9, 1874.*

“I daresay you fancy that as we are called missionaries we are bound to be living in great hardship. I am afraid that is not the case. C. and I are luxuriating for the first time in our married life (two years next week) in having a settled home of our own, and a very pretty little home it is too. Not large, certainly, but compact, and with a nice garden and cool verandahs, &c. The house was originally built for some of the younger members of the Mission to live in, and had one sitting-room and a number of tiny bedrooms branching off from it. We have thrown some of these together, moved partitions, &c., and made a most cosy little bedroom for ourselves, which C. has titivated up with muslin



and pink calico till it looks like a boudoir. Then comes a long narrow room for the nursery. Then a small store-room and then the kitchen. My room occupies one end of the verandah, so that I have to go out of doors to get to it. But it is all very snug, and being wooden one can put up nails and shelves anywhere, and stow any amount of things away. Then the verandah in this climate is as good as another room, and our garden keeps us gay with flowers, so that altogether we are most luxurious—too much so perhaps.

. . . . .  
“We live altogether in a primitive fashion as regards meals, &c., breakfasting, dining, and having tea in the big hall with all the boys. This makes it easy work for the housekeeper, as C. has never to think about dinner, except what is wanted for nurse and baby.

. . . . .  
“We go out in our turns to work with the boys and superintend the various works, farm and otherwise, that are going on. Then for those who know Mota there is a good deal of translating, &c., to be done, and besides all this there is work in school and chapel, so that one’s day is pretty well filled up. We begin early too. At 6 a bell rings to call us, then another for church at a quarter to seven, and breakfast at a quarter past. School at 8 till 9.30, then work till 1. I go out to hoe or plant with

the boys, and find out how profoundly ignorant I am of the simplest matters connected with husbandry, and wish I had taken lessons! I covered myself with confusion the other day trying to plough, but at hoeing, &c., I can hold my own. At 1 comes dinner, and school at 2.15. It is very hard work to keep oneself awake then, and I often go to sleep over dictation, much to the disgust of the boys who want to keep their books neat, and to whom I dictate something utterly wrong. Then comes a blessed two and three-quarter hours in which we try to improve our minds by reading, our bodies by riding, or our gardens by working. Tea follows at six, then evening chapel, and school for an hour. You would like to see my evening school in a corner of my room, with my little black fellows with curly heads and black eyes and spindle shanks stretched out straight in front of them, all writing away at dictation for bare life, and as keen about their marks as can be. I try and chaff them into order as well as I can, and find it answers admirably."

## CHAPTER V

### MELANESIA—SUGGESTIONS OF THE BISHOPRIC

JOHN SELWYN'S arrival at Norfolk Island had been greatly looked forward to by all the members of the Mission. He had offered himself to the work with no view of ultimately succeeding Bishop Patteson, but there is no doubt that it was felt from the very first that he was the man for the future bishop. Even had his personal qualifications been fewer than they were, it would have seemed strange that any one else should fill the office when a Selwyn was to the fore. There was one other man who was an obviously fit person if he would have accepted it. This was Dr. Codrington, the head of the Mission, whose linguistic skill and powers of organisation were invaluable, and to whom the Mission largely owed its vitality during the years immediately succeeding the death of Bishop Patteson. Another name suggested was that of the present Archdeacon Dudley, but ill-health prevented his seriously contemplating the post. Under all the circumstances

it was obvious that John Selwyn would be nominated. His natural fears and sense of unfitness come out again and again in letters full of the simplest humility, but it is more than doubtful whether he would really have liked any one else to have been appointed. One of the qualities which he inherited from his father was a kind of "masterfulness," to which he alludes in a letter to his mother as having been checked by her when he was a child ; and this wish to lead, arising from a true sense of the power of leading, would have made his work less happy, and probably less effectual, had it been his lot to be a subordinate member of the Mission. It was the same all through his life. Captain of the field eleven at Eton, he stroked the University boat when at Cambridge. In succession a Bishop and Master of a College, his leadership ran consistently through every part of his life, it being said that at a dinner party it was invariably he who led the conversation, and led it right well.

"NORFOLK ISLAND, *St. Andrew's Day*,  
*"Advent Sunday, 1873.*

"MY DEAREST FATHER,

"There are two great memories for us in the two days which have come together this year. The first is, that on Advent Sunday 1867, you accepted the Bishopric of Lichfield. How well I remember your letter from Windsor telling me of it, and the

thought, almost the revulsion of feeling that came over me that one would not go to N. Z. after all ; and here I am six years afterwards not only at N. Z. but beyond it, and working at your work, though alas ! not with you. And St. Andrew's Day carries us both back to the evening service at Lichfield last year, when dear little Margaret was baptized. We thought of it first thing this morning, when baby came in in her most joyous mood to see us, and afterwards at the early (English) Communion at which I celebrated, and now 9.30 P.M. (10.15 A.M. with you) I dare say you are thinking of us as the bells are ringing for church. It is a very pleasant thought for us out here, and it will be a pleasant thing to tell her about when she grows a bit older, of the old Cathedral and the warm soft light falling on her, and your voice praying over her, and the Amens coming down from the choir, with such a long interval as it seemed between the prayer and the response. All these are very pleasant memories, and seem to bring us closer together, and I think prove what a help the Church services, with their round of Holy-days and Seasons, are in helping not only one's love to God, but one's love to each other."

*"Jan. 8, 1874.*

"I have now to tell you about a very serious matter which has turned up here, which I am afraid

you will not quite like. It is this : By the statute of the Melanesian Bishopric which was passed in 1868—your last session—and altered slightly in 1871, it was provided that ‘the members of the Mission may recommend a person to be appointed Bishop, or in default of such recommendation, or in case such recommendation shall not be accepted, then the Synod *shall* appoint some person to be Bishop.’ This rule put us in a quandary. We are all willing, nay wishful, to continue as we are for another year or two, and there is no immediate need for any strictly episcopal work. Ordinations there are none, and I dare say the Bishop of Auckland could manage to run down again in case of confirmation being needed. But this rule seemed to leave neither us nor the Synod any choice. Either we must recommend or else let the nomination lapse, in which case it seemed to us the Synod would be bound to elect. Codrington therefore called a meeting on the Epiphany to consider the matter. He first put it to us whether we would recommend or let the matter take its chance. They were all very strongly in favour of recommending. Then came the question, ‘Who?’ . . . We pressed on Codrington most strongly the wish of us all that he should be Bishop, but he refused decidedly, and said his mind was quite made up. . . . I have written to Dudley and to Sir Wm. Martin, urging that if he does feel well enough, he (D.) will let himself



be nominated. . . . Failing that, they nominated me—and indeed they did this absolutely, as the recommendation which will be sent to the Primate runs thus: ‘We recommend the Rev. J. R. Selwyn to fill the vacant Bishopric, but we shall be willing to accept the Rev. B. Dudley, if the Synod should see fit to elect him, and he should accept the office.’ There the matter stands, and you will feel what a responsibility I feel thrown on me.”

The following letter from Dr. Codrington, then at the head of affairs in Melanesia, tells of the impression made by John Selwyn on his first arrival at Norfolk Island. It sets out most clearly the reason for the nomination to the Bishopric, and allows one to gather the generous sentiments which actuated the writer in resigning his own claim to the post and welcoming the appointment of a younger man. The letter is written to the then Bishop of Lichfield, and runs as follows:

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *Jan.* 10, 1874.

“MY DEAR LORD,

. . . With regard to your son I really don’t know what to say because I don’t want to be anything but moderate in my language, and the satisfaction with which I contemplate him is extreme. He certainly keeps us alive, and all the community feels his presence. He at once was on the most friendly terms with the Melanesians, who many of them call him simply ‘John’ without any scruple, and go to his house as if he had been here for years. He is very energetic in



school and in work, but meets with more admiration as yet when he works than when he teaches, for his deeds are more intelligible than his words. I believe it is a good thing for his health that he should work out of doors, though it will hardly be possible to do much in this climate. . . . He will also try to get up some boating, a much more difficult thing here than would be supposed. . . . I can't say very much yet about progress in the Mota language, but I perceive that there is enough for common use, which no doubt will gradually increase.

. . . . .

"I must not omit to say how much we are all pleased with Mrs. John Selwyn. She is so very good-natured and lively that she adds very much indeed to the happiness of our little party. It is very agreeable to see that she makes friends at once with the Melanesians, and it is a good thing that she should have some to live with her. Their house is not suited I should say to a family, having been built to accommodate a very mixed party of young men, but they seem very well pleased with it, and have already very much improved it.

"You will have read something of what we did on the Epiphany before you read this. I don't suppose it was exactly what you wished or expected, but it was really, I think, the only thing for us to do. . . . We thought that it would be right that on the first occasion of carrying out the Statute we should exercise our privilege. The practical result is not much if it is anything, for one may take it for granted that the General Synod, having heard from me what at any rate in my opinion and ours here ought to be done, would have made the appointment as we now recommend. But we have a certain advantage in that in making the recommendation we express our desire that the new Bishop should not be consecrated yet, but wait till he and others have had proof of his being suitable to the post. Everybody here is more content than I am to go on as we are, and I am tolerably content ; but

it is certainly a comfort and support to me to know that the future is, if all goes well, secured, and it will give him a sort of right to occupy a position which whether Bishop elect or not he would have to occupy, and which he will occupy more satisfactorily with such a title than without it. . . . For my own part I am quite easy about my future relations. I don't see the difficulty, which I have been told is a serious one, of playing second fiddle after having played first. . . . I hope and trust all will go well, and I am sure it will be a great satisfaction to you, and go far to make up to you for the absence of your son, if you hear that his work out here is blessed with success and carried on in harmony with all of us. With very kind remembrances to Mrs. Selwyn, I remain, my dear Lord,

“Yours very faithfully,

“R. H. CODRINGTON.”

The Synod seem to have ultimately postponed the whole matter, so that there was no thought of his immediate consecration. He was yet barely thirty, and all were agreed that it would be far better that he should wait for two or three years and gain experience of the work and further knowledge of the language. It would be well, too, that the Melanesians should learn to love and trust him, as they did so amply, before he took over the command of the Mission.

Early in 1874 his second child, another girl, was born, and was named after the cousin to whom he had been so devoted in his boyish days. Writing to this cousin's sister he says :

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *March 28, 1874.*

“Baby No. 2 has arrived! Isn’t that dreadful? . . . She was born on January 30, and baptized on St. Mathias’ Day, the day Bishop Patteson was consecrated in 1861. The little font was most beautifully decorated, and in it stood the portable font which my friends gave me. It looked so pretty shining up through the leaves and water. The service was in English, but all the Melanesians came, and we had two hymns and the blessing in the native language we use. Afterwards there was a whole holiday, and a pig for the boys to cook and eat out of doors.”

Before going on to describe the general work of the Mission, especially John Selwyn’s share therein, which as a matter of fact included a little of everything both indoor and outdoor, spiritual and temporal, by land and by sea, it is interesting to note his position as a Churchman and the anxiety he always felt about affairs in the Church at home. As might be expected from a man of his breezy disposition and wholesome mind, all extremes were abhorrent to him. His natural piety and prayerfulness, coupled with the fact that his father was ruling an English diocese on slightly new lines, caused him to give much anxious thought to these matters even when far removed from them, and in

an atmosphere where such things fade away when men are brought face to face with heathenism.

His great idea was that there should be some general assembly of the Church of England which should speak with a voice of authority, and be obeyed by all. Writing to Mrs. à Court-Repington in 1874 he says :

“I am perturbed about the state of the English Church, though there is so much real work being done which one does not hear of, that one must expect some disturbances. But why won't men learn to obey that they may rule? How can men set up the high standard of sacerdotalism that they do, when they rebel in every possible way? How can they speak of the voice of the Church when they refuse to listen to the voice of one of its Captains? There are worse disciplines for a man's mind than the University course from Putney to Mortlake, and the inexorable ‘row on *all*,’ and the kicking out of the boat if you don't row. . . . I do earnestly long to see some power outside Parliament which may reform the great abuses in the Church, and some body which may define what is the limit of the Church of England both upwards and downwards. There is no danger of such a body narrowing our freedom unduly, but the weight of the voice of the living Church would be very great, and men would have to weigh their ‘conscientious’ (!)

scruples more deeply than they do now before they opposed it."

In the same year, writing to his mother about affairs in England, he asks :

"What is the temper of the Church? I think I know. Every one wants to work after his own fashion totally regardless of his neighbour, especially if that neighbour happens to be his Bishop. But men must see that they must unite soon in a true Church Association of which the leading principle will have to be, 'What can I give up for the sake of unity?'"

In 1877, soon after his consecration, he thus writes to his father :

"I can't understand the position which the E.C.U. have taken up. . . . But it is not a time for analysing people's consciences. It is a time for *doing*. And here I do think you have your chance. Do stir up people, say the Bishops of Peterborough [Magee], Manchester [Fraser], and others, and go straight to the Prime Minister and say we **MUST** have a Synod Conference of the whole Church. We can't go on like this. The *Rock* will howl on one side and the *Church Times* on the other : but I am sure the great body of clergy and laity would welcome such a proposition, and the Church would speak with a power it has never known."

He was fully conscious of the advantage of his



work being far away from the scene of agitation, as may be gathered from the following :

*To* REV. F. E. WATERS.

“OFF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, *August 7, 1876.*”

“Though we have our share of difficulty and doubt, and endless secular work, yet are we free from much which disturbs you at home. But let me give you this comfort, that I, as an outsider, can see how much the Church is gaining. Though torn by doubt and insane enthusiasm, yet the main body is advancing steadily. There may be much to give the blues, but, as at St. George’s, the whole thing is going on slowly but, I am certain, surely.”

Lastly, there is one line written from his brother’s vicarage at Bromfield in 1879 to Mrs. à Court-Repington :

“Did you go to the prayer-meeting at Wilkinson’s [now Bishop of St. Andrews]? He asked for men for me, and I have already heard of two. But one is married, which I don’t want, and extreme, which would frighten our Australian supporters, but not me. It would soon be knocked out of him by contact with heathenism.”

There seems to have arisen once or twice in the minds of some who were most intimate with him a doubt as to his absolute soundness on all matters of



belief. Thus a very close friend in writing a description of him after his death said :

“His views were rather broader than mine, and (I used to think) not thoroughly sound upon some points. He was so full of the love of God that I do not think he quite saw the necessity of dwelling so much as some of us do upon the severity of God as essential to preserve the balance of the attributes set forth in Holy Scripture.”

There is, however, no trace in the course of a vast correspondence, much of it of a most intimate nature and relating to spiritual affairs, of anything more than a wish, natural to a frank and simple mind, to satisfy himself so far as possible of the truth of what he held. In the middle of all his work he never failed to find time for reading, and studied many theological books, sermons, Bampton Lectures, &c. &c., which were sent out to him by friends in England. At the same time there is a touching extract from a letter to his mother which suggests that she too had some fears of this kind : he writes from Norfolk Island in 1883 :

“And now, mother, you see that I am always ready to follow your advice, so *please* never hesitate to give it me. I may be a Bishop in the Church of God, and as such have to advise and direct others but to you I am your son, and nothing can abrogate that highest of relationships. Please do not fancy that I am going to drift away at all seriously from



anything you hold. I thank God that every day the light seems clearer and clearer as to the utter impossibility of believing anything else than the awful majesty of God, and the union with Him which He has made for us in His Son. I may hesitate here and there as to the evidence for this or that, but it is a hesitation which springs from an absolute faith in God in Christ manifesting His love to the world, and often arises because it cannot quite reconcile this or that doctrine with the great fundamental truth. But anything like infidelity or agnosticism, which so troubles men of my age and standing nowadays, seems to me, thank God (I say it most humbly and unboastingly), as a thing on which my mind is firmly settled and made up; and this not by any shutting of my eyes to their arguments, but by a perfect concord and agreement of my reason with my faith. Dear mother, I have written this for your sake, as I sometimes think that what I say troubles you a little. You will feel *why* I write it, not because I think I stand, or that I am not conscious of utter shortcoming, but because I feel more and more the rest of such a faith, and more and more thank God for it. And with this comes a greater acquiescence in my work, as I realise more and more what God is to me, and therefore what He can be to those to whom I am sent."

## CHAPTER VI

### NORFOLK ISLAND

THE work of the Melanesian Mission was twofold. The *Southern Cross* (the Mission ship) made several voyages each year to the various Islands, those who sailed in her being left for shorter or longer periods at different places to start or encourage schools, and to help such native teachers as were working among their own people. On her return journeys the ship brought as many boys as possible to be trained at St. Barnabas' School on Norfolk Island. The other part of the work of the Mission was mainly with this school, though there was always a certain amount of extra labour incurred in ministering to the Norfolk Islanders at the town, who seldom seem to have been provided with proper clerical supervision of their own.

Sometimes, then, John Selwyn found himself voyaging about the Islands, and sometimes working at the school and enjoying domestic life with his wife and children. His letters home to England

never fail to picture the progress of his two little girls "Pearlie" and "Rebie," and afterwards of his boy "Stephie," born in 1875, and named after Stephen Fremantle, a dear Eton friend whose early death was a great grief.

"I am very full," he wrote, "of the loss of my dear friend, Stephie Fremantle. He was such a grand fellow, so simple and straightforward, and with such a power of work in him and influence for good."

And again :

"You may imagine my sorrow on the abrupt announcement of dear old Stephie Fremantle's death. Still, one could not and does not feel very sorry. Long separation such as ours takes off a great deal of the bitterness of death, and I think brings out all the more strongly the bright recollections of past life. This certainly is the case with Stephie's memory. The old days at Eton come crowding back, and I can see the fives' walls where he and Johnny Waller and I used to be such allies, and the place where he once made a cut for five, and, above all, the little captain's room at my dame's where *he* used to read so hard, and I used to come in for half an hour's chat before going to bed. And above all I remember him reading prayers at my dame's, and setting us all such a bright, good example."

But to return to the domestic life at Norfolk Island. His delight in his children was unbounded. Here are some descriptions of their ways which he sent to his mother :

“Pearlie has one very quaint custom, which is to say two graces at meals. The first is long and orthodox, the second is in Mota, and consists of two words, ‘Taltoa, Amen,’ which means ‘Hen’s egg, Amen.’ Where she got this from nobody knows, or what it means either, but she is not satisfied till she has said it.”

“Pearlie chatters in the most delightful way, half Mota and half English, though she understands both equally well, and is always ready to translate one into the other. Some of these translations are very funny. For instance the [native] girls call Clara ‘Clara’ and me ‘John Selwyn,’ and if you ask Pearlie what is the Mota for mamma and papa she always says ‘Clara’ and ‘John Selwyn,’ and then shouts with delight.”

On August 5, 1875, he is able to write and tell his mother of the birth of his first son. The pleasure of the baby’s arrival was a little marred by the prospect of losing his other children, for it had been arranged that as soon as she was able to do so their mother should take them (or at all events the eldest one) to England to live for a time with their grandparents at Lichfield.

"NORFOLK ISLAND, *Aug. 5, 1875.*

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"Clara has got the wish of her heart—a boy. . . . Well, my family increases fast, and I shall soon be like the old woman who lived in a shoe. However, rooms are easily added to a wooden house, and if Pearlie goes home we shall be reduced to our normal state of two. It is hard work to think of giving up the child, but I like to think of my daughter profiting by that influence which I know so well, but have not followed half enough. I like to think of her sitting by your knee, and hearing those stories I know so well, and above all being ruled by that loving will which is so much more strong and so much less fiery than mine. . . . Clara wants the boy to be called John, but I rather object: but she will have her way, I take it. Good-night, mother.

"Your loving son,

"J. R. SELWYN."

The domestic life of the Selwyns on Norfolk Island must have been to some extent spoilt by the presence in their house of a number of native girls who lived with them. The boys lived in the school, but the girls were boarded at the various married people's houses. These girls were many of them betrothed to the boys in early days before they were

brought to the island, and it was found far better when possible to bring them also, because it was thus easier to get the boys, and also there was a better chance of their remaining Christians when both husband and wife had been trained at the Mission. The affection shown by these girls to Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn comes out in many letters from the future Bishop to his mother, and must have been a full recompense for all the care and love so ungrudgingly given.

In 1875 measles attacked the school, and almost every boy was down with the disease. In their native islands very little was ever done to help a sick man; in fact, he was usually taken to a small hut away from his own home and left to take his chance. It must have been a surprise to these boys to find how tenderly they were nursed. Writing to his mother on October 30, 1875, John Selwyn says:

“Every night we used to make a great jorum of arrowroot, and then I used to sally forth with a lantern, and do the rounds. One had to unearth figures in all sorts of shapes and contortions, rolled in blankets, feel their pulses, look at their tongues, and cheer them up as well as one could.”

This is all of a piece with the love of nursing and sympathy with suffering which was one of the features of his self-sacrificing life. It was no doubt



prompted also by his affection for the boys, of which he writes often. Thus, when a very heavy trouble had fallen on the Mission work in Florida, he wrote:

“I know my own love for the boys has doubled since it [the scandal] came out, and the sort of feeling came over me that I used to have at Wolverhampton in a difficulty there of an awful sense of God’s presence, and yet a confiding trust in His help.”

But it was not all easy to him. It was no doubt delightful on Sunday evenings to sit and watch the native girls gathered round his wife and singing in Mota “Art thou weary,” and pleasant enough to teach the boys to row, or see them start out with their food in a bundle for a long day’s pleasure on Saturdays, which were (after the Eton plan) whole holidays. But sometimes a feeling of weariness and a sort of despair took hold of him even in the beginning of his mission life; on November 14, 1874, he wrote to his mother :

“One wants to have a touch of Arnold’s spirit, and teach them what true responsibility is. But how? One is never sure of anything being done, and never sure that anybody sees that anything wants to be done. Well, it all comes to this, that, as Still says, one wants the patience of ten Jobs, and



I haven't got it, and so take gloomy views whiles, when it is one's own fault five times out of six."

On the whole, however, he was hopeful about the school work.

"I think it," he wrote, "a very remarkable and a very blessed thing that a school of two hundred should have been managed so long without any ostensible punishment. The boys are on the whole wonderfully obedient and trustworthy—far more so than the same number of English boys would be."

Every now and then, too, some special event would come to cheer him and bring new hope. A boy crept up to him one night and whispered, "What can I do to help the people of my village?" This proof that the boy had learnt not only to value Christianity, but was filled with the Christian desire of helping others, was a great joy to John Selwyn. "One's heart lifts up," he said when describing it. Again, in the course of a letter to his mother, he writes :

"Sometimes one has great comfort. One sees a boy dying, as Simeon did the other day, with calm faith, and, I believe, a sincere repentance, and the hope that springs from such a death is very great. I often have the calm, peaceful face of the boy, as he

lay in our room with his hand on his head as if asleep, in my mind, and, if one can only send one or two such as he before one, one won't have lived in vain."

It must not be forgotten that, besides all the work of the Mission, Selwyn had while at Norfolk Island to study hard at the new language. The difficulty of this was in his case increased by his lack of ear. When lecturing at Cambridge long afterwards he said :

"Let us take language ; and by that I do not mean philology, though the more you know of that the better, but the art of acquiring and distinguishing uncouth sounds. I speak feelingly, as my ear was my bane all through my missionary life. I have lived as much as most people on islands where I was pioneer, where hardly a soul understood me, and I understood not one word. I have preached a sermon by means of two small boys who were far too shy to stand up before their countrymen in the open, but could just manage to translate my words if they were allowed to hide under the table. And I will back myself under such circumstances to pick up a fair speaking vocabulary, which will pass muster, as soon as most people. But there I stop. I could not *hear*, not even languages in which I catechised and preached. An unexpected sentence,

though I knew every word in it, was a jumble of sounds."

So life at St. Barnabas' Mission Station went on, broken at intervals by voyages to the islands of which there will be much to say hereafter. His first journey in the Mission ship was taken in the autumn of 1874, when he stayed for a time at various places to live *with* the natives, and so get on far more intimate terms than would have been otherwise possible. It was the plan on which the Melanesian Mission worked, and in those same lectures at Cambridge he describes it thus :

"This brings me to the method which alone appears to offer hope for the conversion of great masses of people, and which I believe to be the hope that sways most missionaries to-day. It is this : that the function of the missionary is not so much himself to try and convert, as to thoroughly train and fill with his own spirit those who shall convert their own people. For this . . . we want great teachers and we want great faith. Great teachers, men, that is, who feel the full force of Christ's teaching in their own souls and thus are able to fill others with it, not only in the letter but in the spirit. Men who live with their scholars as a father lives with his children, and absolutely fills them with himself. . . . You will find a glorious example of this sort of work in the life of Bishop Patteson."

In after years he grew well accustomed to these prolonged absences, but just at first the time seemed long, and there was always a sense of uneasiness as to those he had left behind him. One of the places at which he stayed on this first journey was Ara, a tiny island south of Motalara. There he received letters from England and from Norfolk Island, his delight in which he describes in a letter to his mother :

“ARA, Sep. 27, '74.

“On the 10th the ship turned up at Mota. What a pleasant sight it was to see the gleam of her sails through the trees, and to know that she had letters and news aboard. It was not, however, our only news, as a man-of-war schooner came down with an unexpected note from Clara, which was delightful.

. . . . .

“When one had shipped and unshipped persons and things at Mota and Ara, was it not pleasant to lie on one's back and feast on your going to the ‘Drawing-room,’ and Pearlie's quaint vocabulary and Clara's walks and talks with the girls, &c. &c. It *was* good! Certes, though one has a good deal of separation, yet one gets a good deal of concentrated enjoyment out of it all. . . . I must tell you how delighted I was with the bright happy tone in which Clara wrote. It was such a help. Of course I felt

a little anxious as it was our first real separation. . . . And then she wrote me such a bright, hearty letter, full of the work she had got to do, of her girls in the house, of my class at school which she takes, of the children, and of bright sympathy with my work, no complaining about the separation, but looking upon it as our little cross which makes the months we spend together all the sweeter. Altogether I never read a letter with more thankfulness than I did hers."

## CHAPTER VII

### VARIOUS INFLUENCES—BISHOP PATTESON, ETC.

BEFORE going any further with the history of Bishop John Selwyn's missionary work two or three points must be mentioned with a view to its proper appreciation. It is difficult to realise how young he was : reading the serious letters, full of the grave thoughts of an older man, which he wrote to his mother, finding, too, how universal was the feeling that he was to succeed Bishop Patteson, it is hard to remember that so few years had elapsed since he stroked the Cambridge boat, or indeed since he was playing the "wall" game at Eton. But his youth must be remembered in order to understand the difficulties as well as the successes of his career. The responsibilities thrown upon him so early in life were a heavy burden, but the physical strength and the fire and dash which belonged to his years did much to carry him through many a time of stress and danger.

Then again, the climate in which his work had to



be carried on must be borne in mind. This is, of course, tropical, with very little variation all the year round. The rainy season is the most trying time, and the interior of the islands where the bush is thickest is the most deadly locality. Near the open beach the climate is more endurable for Europeans, but fever and ague are prevalent everywhere. John Selwyn suffered severely from these, and it was these that caused his early death just as surely as if he had fallen a victim to the poisoned arrows of a savage foe. Mr. Still relates as an instance of Selwyn's dogged determination that he *would* take his turn at reading prayers on board the *Southern Cross*, while his teeth were chattering loudly with an attack of ague.

One thing more must be remembered. In all his work and the free sacrifice of himself that he made he was influenced by the example of Bishop Patteson. He seems to have tried to follow closely in his footsteps. The fact that the Bishop was also an Etonian may have helped to foster this devotion. He never forgot that it was Bishop Patteson's death which inspired him to volunteer. Thus he writes to Mrs. à Court-Repington on May 5, 1874 :

“You speak of some of the passages in Bishop Patteson's Life being a sort of prophecy of my going out. Did you notice a letter to his uncle, Edward Coleridge, in which he says that there must be some



young fellows rowing up to Surly that night (June 4) who ought to be able to help? Curiously enough I was rowing that evening."

Again, to his mother on September 27, 1874, he says :

"I have not told you how we remembered Bishop Patteson last Sunday (September 20). We were nearly in the latitude of Santa Cruz, though some way to the westward. It was a bright, sparkling day, and when one read the accounts in Miss Yonge's 'Life' it came up very vividly before one's eyes. How quickly the three years have gone! And yet it seems a long while ago. We had just come back from America when we heard of it; do you remember? I do quite well, and the coming of the first thought into my mind, 'Ought I to volunteer?' Well, here I am, and last Sunday's memories brought home very forcibly what I have volunteered to try and do. And how one shrinks when one thinks of it! But then faith says, 'Don't be a coward or distrust the power of God and His work. Distrust yourself, but not Him.' "

He seemed to be continually measuring his life by that of Bishop Patteson and regretting his inability, as he thought, to reach so high a standard.

"I confess," he said, "I do not care for these

people as Bishop Patteson used to care for them. They often irk me, and I get tired and weary. But, thank God, I do feel a desire to spread the honour of His name, and this is such a help."

His reverence for the memory of Bishop Patteson was a large factor in his conduct of the Mission, inasmuch as it led him to alter as little as possible the lines of work which had been laid down by his great predecessor. So he entered with enthusiasm into the twofold life; happy in his home and his teaching in the school, even happier (except for the separation from his wife and children) in the sea-faring and adventurous life in the *Southern Cross* on her voyages among the islands. His knowledge of nautical things and of navigation stood him in good stead, though he was fortunate enough to have the services of a splendid captain who took charge of the Mission ship. This was Captain Bongard, a Sussex man and a marvellous navigator. It is said that if he did but catch sight of the smallest scrap of an island he always knew it again. He was mate of the *Southern Cross* in Bishop Patteson's time, and became captain afterwards. He succeeded an officer who had been old and rather timid, and the change was greatly to the advantage of the Mission. It is sometimes said that the Melanesian Bishops navigated the Mission ship themselves, but such a thing rarely occurred, indeed *never* when Captain

Bongard was on board. Few men did so much as he in a practical way for the advancement of the work. He grasped the scheme of the Mission, and carried it out to admiration. He was so fine a seaman that Bishop John Selwyn himself stood a little bit in awe of him. That he had a vast respect for him is evidenced by an extract from a letter to Mr. Charles Bill, in which he says :

“The ship feels very odd, as I have sent Bongard home to look after the new ship. So the mate is in charge, and he and I look after the navigation. If you come across Bongard . . . he is a first-rate fellow, and as good a seaman as ever stepped.”

John Selwyn's delight in all naval matters was a great help to him in dealing with the officers and men of the various men-of-war and other vessels that touched at the islands. He sometimes, however, felt that too much of his interest was taken up in such things. Writing to his mother from the *Southern Cross* “at sea,” he says :

“If I only knew things worth knowing as well as I know the ins and outs of half a dozen different professions, battles, &c., I should do. The other day a young lieutenant told me that by my talk on naval matters he would think I was one of her Majesty's officers. I felt humiliated, but I can't help it. I read a thing and it sticks. Now I must

go and take a sight, and see whether we have done twenty miles this twenty-four hours."

His great friend, Mr. Bill, writes of him that it is a curious speculation to consider which of all professions would have suited him best, and surmises that in the Army or the Navy or at the Bar he would have risen to considerable eminence. It is interesting to find him wondering how far such subjects interfere with the profession to which he had given himself. The following striking letter bears upon this :

*To his MOTHER.*

*"Easter Day, 1875, NORFOLK ISLAND.*

" . . . How one *felt* the truth of the story of God's love to man when I was trying to bring the message of peace to bear on this matter. That message always is real, but it is when you bring it into direct antagonism with some heathen custom that one sees how *very* real it is. And yet how little does one realise it oneself. Here have I been spending a couple of hours this morning devouring a volume of Alison on the last campaign of Napoleon before the battle of Leipsic. And he was the greatest master of the opposite doctrine that the world ever saw. And yet I have been admiring him. Of course one says that one is only admiring

the pluck and science and energy in that wonderful man. And yet I am not sure. I am not at all sure that there is such an exact balance in one's mind between the right and the wrong as there ought to be. How many would refuse the name he won, if it were all clearly put before them, if they had to purchase it with the meanness, rapacity, and unscrupulousness which he displayed, and with all the loss of life which he so unhesitatingly induced? Not many: no, not even if they had St. Helena put into the opposite scale. . . . I have learnt a lesson or two from it. How carelessly one reads of ten thousand men being killed or wounded, of men working under the fire of a hundred pieces of artillery, just as if it were a mere matter of course for a soldier to expose himself! While I sometimes think of a very trifling risk to be incurred at this or that island. Or again, I read this morning of Napoleon meeting the remains of the Old Guard after the Russian campaign on the field of Lutzen. What for? To send them back to rest at home? Never a bit: but to wheel them round and send them back to Dresden. And I think that I am justified in wasting a whole side of notepaper in describing my quarters if I sleep on the sand at Rowo, or some such place! and think five months a very long time to be away from Clara! Well, they thought of 'glory.' Perhaps I haven't got a right idea yet of 'the glory that is to be revealed.' "

While upon this subject it may not be out of place to mention that later on, when he had been consecrated, one of his grand schemes was to have a ship of his own. He even went so far as to start a fund for the purchase of a vessel to be called the *Ruth*, presumably because she was to go gleanng souls. One lady alone gave him £1000 towards this object, and he would have succeeded in his desire if it had not been for the strenuous opposition of his friends in the Mission, who knew very well that it would be fatal. When on the *Southern Cross* he had to be guided by the regularly arranged voyages, but it was recognised that in a ship of his own he would not be sufficiently cautious, would have probably anchored for days at the mouth of some pestilential river, and, as one of his advisers has said, “would not have lived a twelvemonth.”

The following extracts from letters prove how keen he was on the scheme, the first one showing that the idea had taken hold of him even in the early days before he became Bishop.

*To his MOTHER.*

“Sept. 15, 1876.

“I wish I had £10,000 to start a small ship of my own to go among the islands into whose hands we could play, whose agents we could oversee, and by means of which [ship] we could ensure the natives



getting a fair price for their work. The old monasteries won their way by some such action, and I do not think it at all beneath the dignity of our work. It is a puzzle, which I see Bishop Patteson was thinking about."

(In connection with this idea several references occur in Bishop John Selwyn's letters to a project for forming a trading company in the islands. He was not able, however, to carry this out.)

*To his FATHER.*

"MAEWO, *July 1, 1878.*

"I am very seriously meditating turning my house into a small vessel, say something like the *Undine*, in which I can be more my own master than in the large one which has to carry boys from place to place, and is necessarily much tied down by this. All these traders and labour vessels go about in the islands throughout the year without much damage, and I should be able to maintain a great deal of life in the schools by being able to visit them in January and February, besides being able to pop over to Sydney or Queensland or Fiji, if need be. My official income ought to keep such a vessel going for the five months in which the big vessel is not down here. But this is all a thought and may be a crotchet, but I am very anxious to spend as much



time in the islands as possible, and Codrington is so superlatively good in all matters pertaining to the school that I do not feel that I am much wanted there."

*To his MOTHER.*

"BOLI, April 5, 1882.

"This Mission teaches me the depth of my father's insight, as I see more and more how much more can be done by really good native teachers than by almost any white man. What one wants is to train them a little better than we have hitherto done. My plan for that is a permanent head at Norfolk Island, leaving the Bishop visitor there and supreme in the Islands. [This could only be worked by the possession of a ship of his own.] The others do not quite see it in this light ; but I do not see how, as the churches grow, a man can be both, and intermittent headship is, like an intermittent spring, apt to fail just when you don't want it to."

## CHAPTER VIII

### HIS CONSECRATION

To return to 'the early years of his mission work, it has already been stated that the nomination of the Bishop of Melanesia rests with the members of the Mission, and very soon after Selwyn's arrival they submitted his name to the General Synod of the Church in New Zealand. The whole matter was by this body postponed for three years to his great relief, as is recorded in the following letter to his mother :

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *Sept.* 1874.

“ We have news by this mail of the General Synod at Wellington, though not a soul has written about . I can't tell you how thankful I am about the Bishopric question. I seem to breathe quite freely now, and perhaps by the end of three years somebody may have turned up much more fitted for the post than I, or at least I shall have ample time to win my experience. Meanwhile I am getting to

know the physical part of the business pretty well, I think, and the boating comes very natural and handy to me. I am not out of the wood yet, but hitherto I haven't had a touch of rheumatism. I feel as strong as ever I did . . . even my old back has given up being stiff!"

In 1875 Mrs. John Selwyn and her children went to England, and he was left to feel their loss acutely, though, as he sometimes said, it made the departures for island voyages much easier. The Bishopric question, though postponed, was never out of his mind, and he greatly missed the presence of his wife, with whom he could talk it all over freely. He wrote much to his parents on the subject :

*To his MOTHER.*

"NORFOLK ISLAND, Dec. 13, '75.

"What would I not give for one good talk with my father, though such a question must I think be settled by one's own conscience. I own I cannot see any one else, and on that ground it seems cowardly to let the Mission go on without a working head. But then when that thought is done it is succeeded by such a burst of one's own shortcomings that one is afraid lest the Mission should take any harm by my taking an office for which I am so unfitted. And then sometimes I am conscious of

a cowardly thought, 'What if the Mission should fail and I get the blame of it,' but this I drive away as utterly unworthy and untrustful. God has guided me hitherto, unworthy as I am, and He will guide me in this also, but it is a heavy trial.

. . . . .

"One has not time to be very dull, but I find that it is a very different thing being away from one's wife, and having one's wife away from home. In the former case one has new scenes and a different life, but at home one expects to see a wife or chick about."

*To his FATHER.*

"SOUTHERN CROSS (*at sea*),

"3 days out from N. I.,

"Oct. 5, 1875.

"Codrington has been pressing the question of my consecration in a letter which the Bishop [of Christchurch] received in August '75. The Bishop says in answer, 'The chief difficulty in the way of the election of J. Selwyn to the Episcopate is the securing a meeting of the General Synod. If that could be done I do not see why his consecration to the office should not immediately take place.' . . . He then says that he will make inquiries as to the possibility of convening a meeting which shall have due weight and authority in the estimation of the Church: and goes on to point out that the General

Synod might meet very early in 1877. . . . I mean to write to the Bishop of Christchurch on my own responsibility begging him to hold his hand as far as I am concerned. For, apart from personal reasons on which I will enter presently, this haste seems to be useless and dangerous. Useless, because in no case could Codrington get the Bishop's reply till about the end of the year, and I do not suppose that the Bishop would act until he had heard from him again. How then would it be possible for me to be elected, consecrated, and get off with the ship in April? and if it is deferred till October, no great harm can be done in waiting till February 1877. And it would be *dangerous*, for the Synod would be almost certain to think that I was crammed down their throats, especially after their former action, and would probably resent it accordingly. I cannot see therefore that any good would come from this haste, and I think an indefinite amount of harm might arise.

“ But all this is apart from what is with me the main reason : namely, a growing sense of unfitness for the office. I do not mean unfitness in the sense in which we talk of unfitness, or rather unworthiness, for the Holy Communion; of that any one must needs have an overwhelming sense while at the same time he may be conscious of powers within him which by God's grace may enable him to do his work. But I am conscious of no such powers. Day

by day I feel my own deficiencies more and more galling. I have no memory for languages, and but little application in studying them, and I am utterly deficient in the very important power of remembering people's names. Besides this, until this last year I have felt myself utterly unable to gain any hold on the boys. Certainly during and since the measles I have felt more power in this way, and consequently have never enjoyed my life so much as during these last three months, hard work though it has been.

“Against this the only thing I can fairly put in the balance is that I am fond of the ship and of boating, that I know nearly all the places we go to well, and that there is no one else of our present staff who knows them so well, or who is so fond of that sort of work as I am. This seems to point out that I should be with the ship a good deal, but I think that if I had a station at some northern island such as Florida I might do this and let the vessel return without me. Then with Bice at Leper's Island, Palmer in the Banks group, Still at Bauro, Penny at Florida, and myself further north, while the future Bishop went about in the vessel, we should do very well. Surely there is some one more capable than any man we have yet.

“I wish, how I wish, I could have one good walk with you to talk it all over! And the first thing I would tell you would be my sorrow for opportunities



missed. What would I not give for your habits of application, and for the learning which your care provided for me, but my thoughtlessness threw aside. I am always seeking it now, but the evil habit of desultoriness fights sadly against it, and the actual school and farm life at Norfolk Island has left little time for anything else."

The absence of wife and children at this critical time is often referred to by him, and the extracts on this subject give some of the few glimpses obtainable of his home life in Norfolk Island. Writing from the *Southern Cross* off Mota he says :

"I own I don't like the thought of the house without the two little bright faces, and Pearlie rushing into my room to ask for a pencil and paper, and Rebie strutting down the verandah to greet one as one came in from work."

In a letter from Norfolk Island to a cousin he writes :

"It is rather lonely here now with neither wife, chick, nor child. It is not half so bad being away oneself, but it does not seem at all in the nature of things that one's wife should be away. The room and house are full of shadows, and one expects to hear the little feet or the familiar voice, and so one gets unked occasionally. . . .

“Not that my girls [the native girls] don’t take the most excellent care of me, and the house is in apple-pie order. I have told them off into different sets, and they take it in turn to do different work. One, a most staid old maid, is housekeeper, and she looks after me in the most maternal way, mends my socks, sorts my clean clothes, &c. The smallest of all is flower-gatherer, and she keeps my rooms radiant. At the end of my little den I have three photographs of Clara, Pearlie, and Rebie in glass, and the other day the child of her own notion decorated them with flowers, and never misses now. Is it not a pretty thought?”

One of the chief sacrifices to a man of John Selwyn’s bright sociable disposition must have been the isolation and narrowness of the life on Norfolk Island, and the rare chances of communication with the outer world where he had so many interests and so many friends. He was still a very young married man, and this isolation must have been far more keenly felt when his dear ones were away in England. It is not then surprising to find his thoughts turning towards home. It was pretty certain that his consecration would not be much longer delayed, and it was natural that there should have sprung up in him a strong desire for the event to take place in England. It would have combined so much; he would have had all his best loved with

him, and the consecrating hands laid upon his head would have been those of his father.

*To his MOTHER.*

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *March 8, 1876.*

“And now for the great question as to my coming home. I wonder what you will say about it all. It seems too good a thought ever to come true, especially as I can carry it out with such a clear conscience as to the not running away from work. Fancy walking in the day before the Epiphany to sit in the Cathedral [Lichfield] again with you and Clara and listen to my father, and show the glories of the windows to Pearlle. *L’homme propose* and God will dispose as He pleases.”

*To the SAME.*

“PORT PATTESÓN, *May 4, 1876.*

“Eight weeks more and I shall know my fate. Am I to come home or not? Father, mother, wife, and children, to come home to all! Surely never man had much greater hope than that. I don’t like to dwell on it with all the changes and chances of this mortal life in between, but it bubbles up sometimes.”

John Selwyn had one unusual custom in the matter of letter-writing. Most people write to their

relations and friends so that the letter may *arrive* on the anniversary of a birthday or other occasion. Mails were so exceedingly irregular in Melanesia that he reversed the process and wrote his letter on the special day to be observed. Thus he invariably wrote on his own and his mother's birthdays and on the anniversaries of the death of those whom he had loved, &c. Here is an example of this kind of letter, written on his own birthday in 1876 when his thoughts were full of his coming consecration :

*To his MOTHER.*

"SOUTHERN CROSS (*at sea*), OFF WANO,  
"May 20, 1876.

"Thirty-two years, mother ! I wonder what you would have said to some fairy at the Waimate, who told you that in that time the child you kissed would be knocking about the Pacific, and that you would be spending your old age in a Bishop's Palace in England. This birthday seems a very solemn one to me, though it is hard enough to realise it when one is spending most of the day buying combs for my boys at Norfolk Island with bits of tobacco. And yet it tells me that before I am thirty-three I shall probably be here again as Bishop. . . .

"I am going to keep the middle watch for our Captain, who was up all last night, so I must go to bed now.

. . . . .

“It is an overwhelming thought sometimes, ‘How can I get a real hold on these people?’ and sometimes the sight of the ship so well appointed, which has been provided by the liberality of friends at home and which is here at one’s absolute disposal, almost makes me hate her. I suppose one ought to feel the same in a large parish in England with clubs and schools and influence ready to one’s hand: but I think this is worse. And then the worst of all is that people at home *will* think of one as so good, and write about noble work and self-sacrificing labour and all that sort of nonsense, till one is ready to sink with shame. Still and I think this is the worst part of all.”

Just at this time the question of his visit to England was settled, and he had to make up his mind to a great disappointment. It was not thought wise, for reasons stated in the following letter, that he should go. Nothing is more noteworthy than the brave and uncomplaining way in which he received the decision; it was just one thing more to be ungrudgingly offered:

*To his FATHER.*

“S. CROSS (*at sea*), NEW HEBRIDES,

“*July 10, 1876.*

“The Bishop of Christchurch states very fairly

and kindly all the objections to the course proposed, all of which I think I mentioned in my letter to him. I did not and do not think that any of them are insuperable save that of the great doubt as to the interpretation which the General Synod might put on my going. He thinks that many would say that I counted on the certainty of their confirmation and would assert their independence accordingly. This, of course, quite settled the matter, as nothing would give one greater pain than to have the shadow of a doubt thrown on one's motives; albeit they little know how I shrink from the honour which they would suppose me to covet.

“And so my visit to England falls to the ground. I can't say I am not sorry, as I am very sorry to think that I shall not be able to have one good talk with you about many matters which now press heavily on us. But I am not disappointed as I never built for one instant on the thought. I was almost certain that the Bishop of Christchurch would say what he has said, and I have been all along prepared to acquiesce in his saying it thoroughly and heartily. We shall not be the less together in heart and soul because we are absent in body, and though I may not feel your hands on my head once again I shall know that our prayers are meeting before the Throne of Grace.”

Meanwhile many doubts as to his fitness for the



office of a Bishop not unnaturally crowded into his mind. The chief of these seems to have been the difficulty of preventing the secular part of his work from swamping the more spiritual. To his mother he writes :

“What tries one is the amount of utterly secular work which of its very nature makes one secular. I fight against it, but it is very hard to look upwards through yards of calico !”

*To his FATHER.*

“SOUTHERN CROSS (*at anchor*), MAEWO,  
 June 11, 1876    { *Trinity Sunday.*  
                               *St. Barnabas.*

“It seems to me that we shall have to have three voyages always. Our numbers are so large that the ship is very crowded going down, and three voyages would relieve her very much, and also I think allow of the work being better done. This means seven months at sea for me, part of the cost which has to be counted. Perhaps some day or other Clara will be able to go with me a bit, as mother sometimes used to go with you, but I don’t know at present.

“I have been reading to-night that sublime exhortation to the priests which probably you are reading at this very moment. I think one wants it

here more than in the midst of the shoe clubs and school accounts of parish life in England. Here it is so easy to be a sailor and a boatman, and a tramper through villages, and a sleeper on hardish beds, and all the rest of it, which in the world's eyes make the sort of martyrdom of missionary life, and which in reality are nothing at all; and it is so hard to invest all these with the glow of the inner life which must have warmed St. Paul in his 'journeyings often,' or in his daily handicraft. Language, or rather the want of it, has much to do with this, and I am lazy and idle at that which ought to be the main object of my life. And I feel painfully conscious of an unreadiness to attract the native mind, that is to put my mind alongside his mind, as Dr. Johnson would say. . . . I need not tell you what a comfort it is to me to be able to write to you as I feel I can now, leaning on your perfect sympathy and love."

*To his MOTHER.*

"S. CROSS, OFF MOTA, *Sept. 2, 1876.*

"I know how the little worries and manifold cares of your daily life must require this sense of nearness to God to sweeten and spiritualise them. And indeed I can sympathise with you with all my heart, as our life is one of so much bustle and hard physical work that it is very, very difficult to get up the spirituality

which must be at the bottom of it all. Take to-day, for instance, we have been taking off the Ara folks in a heavy sea, and they have brought no end of traps which they ought not to bring, and one had to think of the boat alongside, and of our twelve passengers who had to be got safely up the ladder. And there were things to be divided on shore, and unpleasant stories coming out at the last moment. Altogether it is very hard to think that all this is means to an end, and that end the winning souls to the kingdom of God. I don't say this complainingly, but only as a fact ; and a fact which joins me to you in the midst of your legs of mutton, and my father in the drudgery of his letters.

. . . . .

“After the Bishopric question is settled I don't care what I do, but we shall then be fitting out and I shall be wanted in Auckland. And that leads me to the great matter that of course lies uppermost on my mind, and does not grow lighter as time goes on.

“Thank you very much for your kind loving words. I can hear you saying them, and would that I could sit on your sofa and say my say again about them. One can't write the thoughts that throng one's brain and trouble one's heart. I feel all that you say about God's calling, and if He calls that He will give the grace which is needful. I feel all this ; but it is very hard to get oneself to believe that He does call. All one's own imperfections stand out

ten times more vividly than before. And beyond that all one's doubts and fears are shrinking from the work itself, and one's anxieties as to its future are redoubled when one thinks that its future movement will have to come so largely from oneself; and then there is no lack of selfish motives besides, which are best unsaid, as they are best driven away when thought of. Well, all these things make it very hard indeed to let that trust you speak of take full possession and govern everything else. I can't analyse myself, but you will understand what I mean. I think I shall be better when I have had a good talk with Clara. There are cases where woman's sympathy, and above all woman's faith and love help men more than almost anything else. And Clara too will be fresh from you so that I shall get herself and you rolled in one."

Then, in a further part of the same letter, he tells of another difficulty that beset him and made him inclined to shrink from any accession of authority :

"One is master to a very great extent now, and the very last thing that such an office requires is masterfulness. There is a quiet way of doing things which I see and envy in others, and at very rare intervals acquire myself, and then I am surprised to find out how easily things go. With our large

school there is a great deal of real orderliness and obedience necessary; and the difficulty is to do this without upsetting the sense of friendship which binds us together, or the self-respect which is not too strong in many of the boys. Boats are very aggravating things in this way. Sails won't go up right, and fellows will always mistake one rope for another, &c., and one hates oneself, when one comes in, for not taking things quietly. Well, you can guess it all, but I like telling you of it, as you will know one's struggles. . . . The latter part of this voyage I have been rather poorly and lazy. My head got wrong somehow, and worried me a good deal, and I have had a touch of fever hanging about."

As it was found impossible for him to go to England for his consecration it became imperative that Mrs. John Selwyn should return at once in order that she might be with him when the day came that would be fraught with so large a measure of added responsibility and solemn dignity. He went to Australia to meet her and describes his delight in a letter to a cousin written from Bishopscourt, Dunedin, on January 9, 1877.

"You may imagine how pleasant it is hearing of you all from Clara, and still more how pleasant it is to have that dear old living letter back again. I had to wait a very long time for her, but it was worth the

waiting. Just at the end I went down to Queenscliffe at Melbourne Heads, and there used to get up at 3.30 A.M. lest the vessel should go by in the early morning. Four days did I repeat this unparalleled devotion, and at last on Sunday morning, December 19, there the ship was, just coming in at the Heads! Off I scuttled with the health officer, caught Clara not in the least expecting me, and my triumph was great!"

How little either thought in the joy of their meeting that one short year was all that was left to them of their young and happy life together on earth!

On their arrival in New Zealand they enjoyed nearly two months of quiet, in which he might prepare for his consecration. This he had planned long beforehand, for in March 1876 he says in the course of a letter to his mother :

"I am writing to the Bishop of Christchurch saying I would rather not go 'starring,' but, if he could find us a quiet berth for a couple of months or so, I would be very glad to fill it, and thus get a little quiet time."

This period was of great value, for not only did his mind become calm and restful in the companionship of his wife and in a life free from small



cares and worries, but he then was able to seek in much prayer and meditation for that courage which it required to take up the high office of Missionary Bishop. When his age—not thirty-three—is considered, and the characteristics which had marked his life, it could not be but that now and then he trembled at what lay before him. Writing to his old friend, Mr. Waters, he says :

“I can’t tell you how much I shrink from it. St. George’s was nothing to this. It seems to demand so much, and I am conscious not only of so little, but also of so many drawbacks in my temper and many other things. . . . Those I have most reason to trust have told me that I ought to allow my judgment to bow before that of others, so I am going to take the awful step, and I know you will not forget me in my anxiety when you approach the Throne of Grace.”

At last, early in February 1877, the General Synod confirmed his nomination to the Bishopric, and the prospect of consecration became immediate.

*To his MOTHER.*

“QUEENSTOWN, Feb. 7, 1877.

“We got the telegrams, for they were many, on Friday morning stating that the General Synod had

unanimously confirmed our nomination. I was rather surprised, as I did not think the question would come on quite so soon. Dudley telegraphed that every one was earnest and unanimous, and this is a great comfort. It seems to make the duty very clear, and it is a great thing to relieve one's mind when there have been so many misgivings as in my case. The Primate at first wanted to have the consecration on Quinquagesima, but I found we could not get away in time, and begged for the next Sunday.

. . . . .  
“We have had a very nice quiet time up here, though the weather has been very bad. I can't say I minded much, as, after being all about the colonies, a snug little house with one's wife and boy is very pleasant. There is a delicious little church next door, where we have morning prayer, and where Clara and I can go in the middle of the day.”

Besides getting some rest and quiet parish work at Queenstown he was delighted to find a hospital hard by, where he was able to indulge his lifelong fondness for cheering and helping the sick. He says of this latter experience that it was “very helpy,” a word which he seems to have coined, and which, with another similar word, “resty,” he frequently used in his letters.

Like so many other men who have lived lives full

of sympathy and love for others, he had a keen sense of humour, and delighted in good stories. Even in the course of a letter such as the above, he cannot resist telling one. He had been on an excursion to some mines and was talking of the difficulties and expense of transport; he then says:

“*Apropos* of packing goods, Mr. R. told me that a man ran away from his wife on one or two diggings in Australia without success, and finally bolted over here. The first thing he saw when he had settled down was his wife on a pack-horse being ‘packed’ up to him at 1s. per lb., *and she a heavy weight!*”

His consecration was finally settled to take place at Nelson on Sunday, February 18. Even so there was hardly time for him and Mrs. Selwyn to get down from Queenstown. They arrived late on the 16th, and two days afterwards he became one of the youngest Bishops ever consecrated in our Church. Writing to Mr. Charles Bill he alludes to this:

“SOUTHERN CROSS (*at sea*), Oct. 1, 1877.

“Thank you for your words, my dear old friend, about my Bishopric. You, who know me so well, will know that it is no seeking of mine that I was enrolled among the ranks of what Mr. Alderman Macarthur is pleased to call ‘the boy Bishops.’”

Subjoined is the letter which he wrote to his father on the evening of the day, when all was over, and it is followed by an extract from a New Zealand newspaper, giving a report of the touching sermon preached on the occasion by Mr. Dudley, now Arch-deacon, at that time incumbent of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Auckland.

*To his FATHER.*

“NELSON, *February* 18, 1877.

“MY DEAR FATHER,

“I don't know what I am to say to you about to-day except that it is over, and that I stand pledged to carry on as head the work which you and Bishop Patteson began. We have had a glorious day, and bright, hearty services. Owing to the floods down south we missed the *Ringarooma*, which would have brought us up on Wednesday, and only managed by dint of very hard travelling to arrive late on Friday night. But we were just in time for the closing of the Synod, and, as they had invited me to take my seat, I was able to make a little speech and thank them for the confidence they had shown to me.

. . . . .

Yesterday it was hard to be quiet as people came to call, but we had a nice quiet evening together, and time to think and write a bit of a sermon I had to

preach to-day. The main service was at 11; you know the church well, and can imagine the surroundings. Everything was beautifully arranged and ordered. I sat just beneath the pulpit, close to the steps of the chancel. Dudley preached a really admirable sermon, full of tender allusion to you and Bishop Patteson, and earnest words of caution and help to myself. The Bishops of Auckland and Dunedin presented me, and the Primate was most kind and helpful, as indeed were they all. I do not think you will want me to analyse my feelings, even if I could do it. There are things which one feels but cannot describe. Perhaps the greatest and most comforting thought I had was one of rest. It was done. The long, hard struggle was ended in my accepting the post, and I was being sent forth with all the power and blessing the Head of the Church could bestow. I had a quiet time at the Communion . . . and I was drawn very near you all. Perhaps you were kneeling then in the chapel at Lichfield (though it would have been very late), but at any rate we were one in spirit. I like to think of your joy as I hope it is, and to pray for your work as one who has just begun to have part of the load laid on him also. I have no doubt you have sent your blessing to me; will you and my mother accept mine in return, the blessing of a son who is feeling every day more and more what a debt he owes to his father and mother, and who hopes to be stirred by



their love to follow the example they have set him ?  
With Clara's fondest love to you both.

"Believe me,

"Your most loving and dutiful son,

"J. R. SELWYN,

"*Bishop.*"

*From "THE CHURCH CHRONICLE FOR THE DIOCESE OF  
WELLINGTON," March 1, 1877.*

"Mr. Selwyn showed his earnestness of purpose and thorough sincerity in coming out to devote himself to the service of his great Master amongst the savages of Melanesia, and it would have been impossible to find for the office to which he has been formally appointed a man whose heart was more in his work, or who was in any way better fitted for the trying and arduous life he has selected, than John Richardson Selwyn.

"Mr. Dudley's sermon concluded as follows: 'And now let us apply our thoughts more closely to the subject of the Melanesian Mission brought under our special notice by the solemn service in which we are engaged. The whole history of that Mission is an illustration of love going forth in self-sacrifice and proving a marvellous power. Look first at its founder, the first and only Bishop of New Zealand, with us in spirit as we all know this day, and with his whole heart offering up his son for this work.

"In the same spirit it was, too, that Bishop Patteson was enabled to sacrifice so many of his natural tastes and inclinations, and to throw himself and all his varied powers and gifts heartily into this missionary enterprise. . . . This spirit it was, this, and not his linguistic skill and other talents, which gave him his marvellous power.



“ ‘ And this same spirit, when it went forth with power from the martyr’s grave in the Southern Seas, drew our friend back from his mother-country to engage in this work, and has ever since drawn after him from all parts of England such abundant freewill offerings that the Melanesian Mission finds itself (at least as compared with some Missions) opulent. . . .

“ ‘ Brethren, what shall we say to him ? It seems to me we can say nothing better than this : Go forth, brother—Father in God, as you will be ere this service is concluded—to your work of faith and labour of love among those your father cared for and first sought out, to whom Bishop Patteson devoted himself, and by whom his life was in ignorance taken. We wish you good luck in the name of the Lord. We trust that the life you this day surrender to Him more fully than ever may long be spared for His service : that every needful gift may be bestowed upon you : and that in all your perils, by land and water, in weariness and painfulness, in the disappointments you must experience, and in the difficulties, impossible to be foreseen, which must arise, you may ever be cheered by the sense of His love, who never leaves nor forsakes one faithful servant. We will follow you ever, and those with you, with our thoughts and our prayers and our freewill offerings. And we ask you ever to remember that the work God is doing through you is not confined to Melanesia, but that as the signs of an Apostle are wrought out in you—as we are assured they will be—and as the power of Christian love is more and more shown in your complete self-consecration, that power, even though its apparent effects be but slow and tardy in Melanesia, will be felt here in New Zealand ; it will be felt in Australia ; it will be felt by England. Yes, wherever the English Church has faithful children, men will bless God for you, and will be cheered in their own troubles, and will be stirred to new devotion, and will recognise in the reports of your labours one more token of the reality of Christ’s presence, and of the unfailing fulfil-

ment of His parting promise, 'I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' "

A simultaneous service was held in Lichfield Cathedral at 11 P.M., so as to correspond as nearly as possible to 11 A.M. in New Zealand. Even at this late hour there met together a goodly number who wished to join their prayers with those being offered in the Antipodes for the new Bishop. At this service the Bishop of Lichfield prayed that his son might unite boldness with caution, and might not be puffed up by reason of his high office.

## CHAPTER IX

### DEATH OF MRS. J. R. SELWYN

THE next two or three months were spent in New Zealand speaking and preaching for his Mission and renewing many old friendships. The welcome he received as his father's son was a great delight to him.

*To his FATHER.*

“AUCKLAND, April 5, 1877.

“Many are the inquiries after you, and the expressions of rejoicing at having a Bishop Selwyn amongst them again. *Sed quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore!*”

Towards the end of April Bishop and Mrs. John Selwyn with their eighteen months' old son arrived at Norfolk Island to take up the work there. The two little girls had been left with their grandmother at Lichfield, and sorely were they missed in the home life which was resumed once more at St. Barnabas' Mission Station.

*To his FATHER and MOTHER.*

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *April 27, 1877.*

“On the Sunday we arrived I made my first appearance in the chapel in the evening, Codrington preaching about the continuity of office, and I saying a few words at the end. The next day we all met in the evening and talked over matters. This is a great step, as we have rather too much isolation. . . . When I held my first Confirmation in town [*i.e.*, the port where the Norfolk Islanders lived] there were some thirty confirmed, and we had a very bright hearty service. Altogether I think my episcopate here has begun very brightly, and I hope we may keep it up.”

The isolation he speaks of was a matter much in his mind, and from time to time he tried various methods of drawing the little Mission society more closely together. A letter to his mother on this subject may be quoted here, though it was not written till some years afterwards :

“NORFOLK ISLAND, *Septuagesima, 1879.*

“Do you remember writing to me about our not meeting together for prayer? Well, ever since I have been Bishop I have been trying to rectify this, but it has been uphill work. First, I tried Bible reading, and each of us to say something, but people

held their tongues, and I defy any one to go on by himself addressing all his intimate friends! . . . Now, I think, we have solved the difficulty. It has always been the rule here that on alternate Sundays we have Mota Holy Communion, and on the Saturday before, after church, the communicants stay and are addressed by the leading man, Bishop, or whoever he may be. I have taken the idea from this. On the evening before our English Holy Communion we meet together, one of us (in turn) addresses us, and we have prayers for our work. The addresses turn on work as much as possible, and on the Holy Communion, so with fresh minds every week they do not get stale. I hope you will approve of this."

In the autumn of 1877 he went a voyage to the islands, and used some of his spare time on board ship to write to those who had sent him congratulations on his consecration.

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

"'SOUTHERN CROSS' (*at sea*), Oct. 31, 1877.

"I often wonder who and what I am myself, and at times fall, oh ! so fall, even from *my* standard of what a bishop should be. I sign myself as Bishop Patteson used to, and as I have no definite diocese I think it is the best way. As to title I am supremely indifferent. On board my sailors call me 'Bishop'

generally, though the captain generally begins with 'My Lord' in the morning. Personally I like the simple title best."

*To* REV. F. E. WATERS.

"'SOUTHERN CROSS' (*at sea*), Nov. 2, 1877.

"Many thanks for your kind letters of congratulation and sympathy. I need the latter far more than the former, as the responsibility presses very heavily on me at times, though the blessings are often very great. You and I know what responsibility on very young shoulders means, don't we? It is very pleasant to find you remembering and speaking of those days as you do. I look back on them as some of the happiest and certainly some of the most instructive of my life. And the lessons of our short but very full experience often come in to cheer and comfort me now. Come what may, things *can't* look much blacker than they did in the January days when we used to serve out soup in the back kitchen, and then go out to meet —— and —— and all the rest of them! I always think I learnt the power of prayer more in those first few months than I ever did before."

"Come what may"! He little knew the terrible blow so soon to fall upon him. Few men who ever lived have had a keener delight in the quiet joys and intimacies of family life than he: few men



blessed with wife and children have suffered such limitations of their happiness. Of the six years that he had been married a large part had been spent in voyages to the islands, when his wife had been left for months together at Norfolk Island; another large part had been spent by Mrs. Selwyn on her visit to England; leaving a singularly short period during which husband and wife were together. Added to this was the absence in England of his two little girls, an absence which he of all men felt most keenly. Yet were these things offered gladly: not one word of grumbling, not one word of grudging, can be found in all his letters. He was now to be tried still more severely. On December 30, 1877, Mrs. Selwyn died at Norfolk Island, leaving a little baby, Clara Violet, to bear her name for a few short months, and then to rejoin her in her rest in Paradise.

There are one or two letters giving an account of that sad day, and it is impossible not to be touched by the simplicity and resignation, the certainty that "all is well," and the never failing generosity with which he offered even this—his very heart—to the Master whom he served.

*To the* REV. F. E. WATERS.

"NORFOLK ISLAND, Feb. 6, 1878.

"I have only just been able to begin my letters

again, as since my dear wife's death on December 30 I have been almost constantly engaged in nursing Mr. Penny [one of the Mission staff, now Rector of Wolverhampton], who was very ill; and then a vessel came in from Auckland, necessitating report writing, &c. I can hardly yet realise the loss of that dear bright life which was the light of my home. One goes about and does one's ordinary round of work and is so busy that there is hardly time to think, but it is very terrible at times; and yet I am so very happy for her sake that I am wonderfully upheld and comforted, and I can always soothe myself by going to her grave. It was a sudden and yet not an unlooked-for blow, as of course we had prepared for her confinement, and so, though the last few days were clouded by delirium, I was not unhappy, as the most childlike trust and love shone through it all, and one could see her mind was stayed on God, and was therefore in perfect peace."

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

*"March 11, 1878.*

"She fell asleep in my arms at twenty minutes past ten on Sunday morning. I was so wonderfully blessed. I went to service that morning and gave the blessing, and in the evening, when we buried her, I followed in my robes, and felt so strong that I

read the last part of the funeral service. It was a sight to see how the people loved her. I think nearly every one in the Island came to the funeral, and the children of her classes sent me afterwards five pounds to get some memorial of her. My girls all take great interest, and every Sunday we have a fresh wreath of flowers, and a fresh set of flowers for the cross itself which lies on the grave, and they stand round and sing hymns. And so I am wonderfully upheld."

What a beautiful picture this is! The native girls, for whose sake she had given up so much and had worked so hard, who had been used to gather round her when the Bishop was on his voyages and sing the hymn for those at sea, now standing by her early grave and comforting the husband she had left by singing the sacred songs that she had taught them.

Bishop John Selwyn never used the melancholy language so frequently heard about death. When speaking of the cousin to whom he was so deeply attached as a boy, or of his dear friend Stephen Fremantle, or, later on, of his father, his words are an example of the really Christian manner in which death should be spoken of. There are two letters from him, both to Mrs. à Court-Repington, written nearly twenty years apart, which bear witness to this :

“ST. GEORGE’S VICARAGE, WOLVERHAMPTON,

“*Aug. 17, 1872.*

“I only hope you are having as lovely a day for the funeral as we are here, with bright sun overhead and all nature laughing round. I never think there is much sorrow in a funeral. There is such a resty feeling about it all, such a sense of lifting upwards in the service, that I am sure it is really less sad than any other part of the death.”

*To MRS. A COURT-REPIGTON.*

“18 DE VERE GARDENS, W., *Oct. 18, 1891.*

“In God’s mercy the brightness of the light from the other world grows, as the darkness of the sorrow ever lessens. The departure of a very loved soul wrings our hearts for a while, but there is nothing, not even the words of Christ Himself—though of course it is by the power of those words that it acts—nothing which so leads one’s own soul to contemplate the happiness of those who are gone and makes us try to follow them.

“I like to think of you by that quiet grave which I am sure now will be able to soothe not sadden you, and your own St. Luke will still be a beloved physician, and tell you of Him who raised Jairus’ daughter, or better still that most wonderful of all stories for its marvellous simplicity, of Him who saw

the lonely mother and had compassion on her. I wonder whether this will all sound commonplace to you? I hope not, for indeed it is very real to me. My own grave at Norfolk Island has never for fourteen years lacked its flowers, and I lay them now very much as a thank-offering for all that grave has taught me. May it be so with you, dear friend, and may you at the end find that the loss that seemed so terrible has been in reality a blessing to you both. It must be so."

On February 18 he consecrated the churchyard where he had laid his wife. The letter describing this brings to mind the incident related as happening when he went out in 1866 to visit his parents in New Zealand and rescued a little boy under similar circumstances. It must be noted, however, that the word "boy" as used in Melanesia simply means a native, and does not refer to his age.

*To* REV. F. E. WATERS.

"NORFOLK ISLAND —

"On the day [anniversary] of my consecration we consecrated the cemetery where my dear wife rests. It was a very solemn little service. The clergy walked in procession round the graveyard while all our boys and girls sang the 23rd Psalm and the 'Nunc Dimittis.' Then we had a lesson, and finally



a very pretty hymn written by Mr. Codrington. I only just got back in time for it, as on that day one of our boys was carried away in a small canoe, in which he was fishing, right out to sea. The news came while we were at dinner. I rushed off at once, got a boat, and rushed down to the spot where he was last seen. . . . We found him some three miles off the land. He was sitting on the canoe, which was bottom up. There was tremendous excitement among our boys when he was brought up here."

On the following Easter Day he wrote to his mother from on board the *Southern Cross* at sea :

"You can easily believe what a different Easter Day this has been to any that I have ever had yet. 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept,' pervades every thought and every service. . . . The separation now is very different from anything one ever felt before, and yet it is nearer. 'Set your affection on things above' seems easier, too, and surely God in His mercy means it to be easier when He takes away one who was so great an earthly help. . . . We began by an early Communion at seven o'clock, and I said to Penny that I think we and those at Norfolk Island were probably the first who began to keep Easter Day in all the world, as there are hardly any churches eastward of us except those in New



Zealand, and hardly any of them begin before eight o'clock."

Meantime Mr. Still, knowing well the anxiety that would be felt in England about the Bishop's welfare, wrote to Mrs. Selwyn (the Bishop's mother) as follows :

"NORFOLK ISLAND, *April 9, 1878.*

"All is hurry now that the *Southern Cross* has come in; but I thought you would like just a line to say how our Bishop is on leaving for the Islands. He has been wonderfully well all this time, going about his work in the old hardworking, cheerful spirit. I fancy it is even harder for him now that the first strain is over, but he bears up most bravely. He very seldom speaks gloomily of himself, though he sometimes says it seems to get worse as time gets on."

More than one allusion will have been noticed in the foregoing letters to the love of flowers which seems to have characterised the native girls at the school on Norfolk Island, and must have had a civilising influence. Not only is the use of flowers for adorning graves repeatedly mentioned, but Bishop John Selwyn speaks of the brides at the not infrequent weddings which took place "looking so nice in their print dresses, with their hair dressed with white flowers." In another letter he says :

"We thought much of dear Rebie on Monday [her birthday], and the girls made such a pretty

wreath for her picture. After it had hung there awhile I took it off to her mother's cross. I thought the child would like it as it were coming from her."

This year, 1878, was probably the saddest in the whole of the Bishop's life. In the course of the spring he went off for a voyage among the islands, staying for some time at various places. Amongst these was Maewo, and here he was to receive another blow. He had left his only son, Stephie, and little Clara Violet, the baby, in safe keeping at Norfolk Island. Of the latter he wrote that she was "a very bonny baby" when he came away. He was now to learn that God had seen fit to take His lamb into His eternal arms. He thus describes the news being brought to him :

*To MRS. À COURT-REPINGTON.*

*"MAEWO, July 18, 1878.*

"The boy who came up to my little house at Maewo shrank from telling me the news, and said only, 'Your child is dead.' I gasped out 'Which?' I felt as if I *could* not spare Stephie, and it was a great joy almost when I heard it was the little one. Not that I did not want my little Violet to keep alive her mother's name ; but I could spare her, and perhaps—nay, certainly—God is merciful and has taken her from the evil to come."

This chapter shall close with a beautiful letter written to his mother while on this voyage :

“ ‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*),

“ SOUTH OF SANTA CRUZ, *June 8, 1878.*

“I liked reading of the joyous Christmas that the children had, though it was a strange contrast to the sad hard fight with death which was going on in our little room at Norfolk Island. But they were spared that wondering awe which attends a child's first meeting with illness and death, and that wistful longing which would have come over them for the mother who was gone. It was well. One likes to wonder if her spirit was allowed to cross those 16,000 miles of space and look down on the children she missed so much, and yet gave up so freely. It would, to our thinking, be a fit reward. And yet one knows nothing of conditions of life between here and the day of judgment, and even if such glimpses were allowed, one cannot separate the thought of them from the longing which such a glimpse would give if vouchsafed to a soul living here. Does death so change the conditions of our being that such a sight would be pure joy? We cannot tell. And yet even to us there is more of joy than of sorrow in the thought of the spirit mother watching Rebie dancing into the room as the New Year, or hearing Pearlie singing the Christmas hymn. It is very very wonderful.

“*June 12.*—I meant to have written to you last night when you were all assembled probably at Eton for St. Barnabas, but I went to sleep. It was not for want of thinking of you, though, as I thought of little else all day, and told my boys in the evening how year after year the Eton party had helped our work, and I told them also how I had first heard for certain that we were to go out at that meeting, and how Clara had determined to come as a ‘daughter of consolation.’ Do you remember that day, mother? How well I remember it—the pouring wet, and the pew-opener who would lead us close to you, and then your little note, and above all I remember my darling’s earnest though tearful face as she pressed my hand and gave herself up to that work from which she never flinched—no, not once. And then we looked together and spoke of the figure of our Lord in glory, who with open arms seemed to call us on. The real arms have closed round *her* now, and she has learnt, I earnestly believe, what peace He can give.”

## CHAPTER X

### DEATH OF HIS FATHER—VISIT TO ENGLAND

THE letters written by Bishop John Selwyn to his mother and to one or two other specially favoured correspondents are wonderful for the fulness of detail and graphic description, which make his life, whether at Norfolk Island or on voyage among the islands, extraordinarily vivid. But it is impossible not to be equally struck with his reticence. Conversation with any of those who worked by his side reveals how often and how seriously he was attacked by malaria and other illnesses due to the climate. His own reference to such things is always of the slightest, and frequently coupled with some joke or cheery word which might do away with any anxiety on his behalf. Thus he would say:

“We have been back from the Islands about a month, two weeks of which I have spent indoors under a dragon of a doctor who was very savage

when I got ague a second time through going about too much."

Or,

"Since I last wrote I have had one attack of ague, and hope I am getting rid of it. The result has been oceans of tonics and quinine:—which I always forget, and the doctor looks reproachfully at my full bottle!"

On this voyage in the summer 1878 he was (to add to his other troubles) by no means free from illness, and in the following note there is the first allusion to anything going wrong with his feet, in which, and in his legs, he was afterwards to suffer so severely :

"I had an attack of ague the other day, but that has passed over and I am very well; only my foot hurts me sometimes."

But this terribly eventful time had yet another sorrow in store for him. In a totally unexpected and accidentally abrupt manner he learnt that his father was dead.

*To his MOTHER.*

"MAEWO, *July 2, 1878.*

"MY DARLING MOTHER,

"I have come down here for news, and news I have got. How can I pour out my heart to you



or tell you how you live in my heart, and how I long to comfort you? I could do that, as I have passed through the same great sorrow myself, and now I can hardly realise that the end of that grand unselfish life has come at last, and the crown won. You have endured many a separation, and He will help you to endure this. But how I long to be with you! Perhaps some telegram may come to say that you want me, and then I shall come at once. I am writing on board a labour vessel where I have only heard that my dear father is dead. The agent said to me just as the man did about Bishop Patteson, 'By-the-by, who is that Bishop Selwyn who is dead in England?' And all I have seen is that Maclagan succeeds him. . . .

"I wrote to him [his father] only last night, and I shall let the letter go, as you will like to see it. May God pardon me for the sorrow my carelessness has caused him, though I rejoice to think that the few last years I have been some help and comfort to him if only by my absence [*i.e.*, his taking up the work in Melanesia]. I cannot write here, and must wait till I get home to my little house at Maewo, when I can think it all over, and weigh what I ought to do. . . . May God guide you and help you and be with your children. I can't bear to think of that dear old home broken up.

" 'So grows in heaven our store.' God is trying us heavily this year; I hope it may be for our

eternal good. Now I must try and carry on his work, that what he began may go on as he would have made it. That is his legacy to me, and please God I will do it. Give my fondest love to our chicks.

“Your most loving and dutiful son,

“J. R. SELWYN, *Bishop.*”

At this point in his letter he wrote out in full the Collect for All Saints' Day, and the passage in the prayer for the Church Militant, beginning with “We give Thee humble and hearty thanks.”

“Distance softens sorrow wonderfully. I feel as if he was nearer to me now as I sit alone in my little hut at Maewo with a great gale roaring overhead at midnight, and all my love goes swelling out towards him, and the acknowledgment of what he was to me, without the sense of blankness which one feels when one is very near those who are taken. That comes when I look at his letters and think that I shall nevermore see those beautifully straight lines, and well formed letters, and trace the love growing stronger between us day by day. I did hope, too, that I might have been allowed to officiate with him once as bishop. We must wait now.

“*July* 4.—I have been pondering all day on what I ought to do, and I think I ought to go home, if

only I could get there *now*. It seems it ought to be now rather than later, as I shall be able to help you to settle your plans, if only I could get home in the next few months.

. . . . .

“I pray so earnestly, though not as earnestly as I could wish, for you, mother. To-day I went down to bathe and prayed by the side of the stream in the glorious evening light, and seemed so near you all. This work seems now his special legacy to me—his and Bishop Patteson’s—and yet at times I feel very cold and dead about it.

. . . . .

“My mind is very full of you and plans as I trudge along the narrow paths, and I hate the thought of all the business I shall have to do if I show my face in England. That horrid S.P.G. will send me to preach at least half a dozen sermons, for which I have very little taste ; I must try and write some on board.”

He frequently poured out his thoughts, especially on matters that moved him deeply, in verse ; and, though most of the poems he composed were obviously not meant for publication, yet here and there some lines have been preserved which give a clearer insight into his feelings on some special occasion. A good example of this is found in the verses he wrote on hearing of his father’s death.

9

" Alone I stood upon the shore,  
 Where oft my father stood before,  
 When first he came to plant the Cross,  
 Disdaining all the world calls loss,  
 Contented for the love of God  
 To follow where his Master trod,  
 And seek, where clustering islands hedge  
 The ocean highway's farthest edge,  
 The souls whom Jesus would compel  
 To throng His marriage festival.

" I felt alone :—for, though my boys \*  
 Whispered in sympathy, our joys  
 Are deeper far than they can know,  
 And deeper, therefore, is our woe.  
*They* scarcely feel the ties of home  
 Which bind *us* wheresoe'er we roam,  
 Nor that fond link of mutual love,  
 The mystery of God above,  
 Since therein unto us is given  
 To know the Father's love in heaven :—

" But loneliest then, when came the thought  
 Of all the ship's return had brought  
 Of tenderest sympathy, the shower  
 Of love a wife knows best to pour.  
 Ah ! then a double blankness pressed  
 With silent force upon my breast.

. . . . .

" But for one moment : then the light  
 Burst forth across my faithless sight,  
 ' Why should I wish my darling here  
 To share my sorrow ? Surely there  
 She shares his joy. To her is given  
 To welcome him within that heaven

\* Melanesians.

Wherein the Lord's redeemèd rest,  
With His eternal presence blest.  
The daughter did but go before ;  
The father follows : on that shore  
Our store increases evermore !'

"I need not mourn the ship's return :  
Thoughts such as these more truly burn  
With comfort than the written line,  
For that is human, these divine.  
These are the messengers of love  
Which bind us to our home above,  
These the communion of God's saints  
To cheer us when our spirit faints,  
And bid us think that they and we  
Are one in Christian unity."

He quickly determined that it was necessary that he should return to England. There was his mother's future to arrange for, and there was the guardianship of some relatives which now fell on him and required his attention. On board the boat by which he sailed to Australia *en route* for England he wrote to announce his arrival, in the course of which letter he says :

*To his MOTHER.*

"SS. 'WOTONGA' (*at sea*), Sep. 1, 1878.

"On Sunday evening we discovered a vessel under the land, which turned out to be the *Dayspring*, the Presbyterian Mission vessel, which was cruising round. I went on board, and they were very civil,

and asked me to hold service. This was rather formidable, as I had no idea what a Presbyterian service was like. However, I thought of my father, and used all the Church prayers I could remember, and read a chapter of the Bible, on which I held forth. Then we had a good talk, and they told me a little about my father, and gave me a copy of *Punch*, with lines to his memory. I then learnt for the first time when he died."

On arrival in Australia he got letters telling him much detail of which he had hitherto been ignorant, and learnt of the project of "Selwyn College" as a memorial to his father. It should be mentioned that on this voyage home he brought his little son Stephe with him, acting as his nurse, and looking after him in a way that greatly touched his fellow passengers. Here is an extract from a letter written at this time:

*To his MOTHER.*

"BATHURST, Sep. 30, 1878.

"I like the idea of a College as at Keble, but it will take a vast deal of money. However, Bishop Abraham does not seem at all doubtful about it. You will like Stephe, and I hope to have him thoroughly in hand by the time we get home. He fights me stubbornly (like his father) in the most comical way, as if I was one of his girl nurses, and



wonders that I don't give way. My love to my darlings. I can't believe that next month I may almost say, if God will, I shall see them. Tell them that daddy won't be long after this, and they must have their best kisses ready for him and Stephie."

At last the travellers, the Bishop and his baby boy, arrived at Lichfield. It was nearly six years since he had seen his mother, and several since he had seen his little girls, who were now six and nearly four years old respectively. It is not therefore surprising that they had almost forgotten him, and relate that they felt "dreadfully shy" as they sat up to what seemed a very late hour awaiting his coming. They, with their grandmother, were staying with Bishop Abraham close to the Cathedral at Lichfield, during the time that the house in the Close, in which Mrs. Selwyn now lives, was being prepared.

Is it not possible to picture the scene? The silent Close; the dark December night; the listening for the sound of wheels; the stream of light as the door is thrown open; the sturdy figure of the Bishop bearing in his arms his little Stephie (wrapped in shawls against the cold of an English winter), and hurrying forward with eager eyes that hungered for a sight of his widowed mother and his motherless girls. But his own words are best, written just a year afterwards:

*To his MOTHER.*

“‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*) DEC. 6, 1879.

“Look at that date, mother, and see if you remember it. I was just arriving at Lichfield, and can see the picture now so vividly—the pretty drawing-room looking so warm and bright—the two shy chicks sitting up to see daddy, and the dear old mother in the corner with them. And that is a whole year ago! It seems ten and yet only yesterday. Well, it was worth the long journey and the hard racket—but it was all too short. And then, dear mother, I renewed my lease of you. We have always been doing that in our lives: in 1861, 1866, and now again in 1878; and each time has brought its own help to me.”

A Lichfield lady used at that time to come in as governess to the two little girls, and from her pen there is a further account of the impression made by Bishop John Selwyn. It is contained in a short sketch of him written for his daughters since his death. This lady says:

“How well I remember my first meeting with him in Bishop Abraham’s dining-room! He came in with you two girls clinging one to each hand and Stephie on his shoulder, and dear grandmamma bringing up the happy little procession. I can recall the strong active figure, and the beautiful dancing

light in his eyes, as well as the rested happy look in his mother's face, and I love to remember that my first meeting with him included his thanksgiving in the Cathedral for his safe arrival. His first request to me was, 'Come with us all to give thanks,' and my last meeting with him included that happy Easter Communion with you all in 1897 in grand-mamma's little room. So my first and last memories of him are of 'giving thanks,' which surely was the very key-note of the bright, joyous spirit none of us can ever dissociate from memories of him."

He was endowed with a large measure of that great gift from God, a natural love of children. No wonder, then, that his heart went out in special fulness to these little maidens, and that they in return were devoted to him. Long separation such as fell to their lot could not fail to make some little difference, not in the measure of their love, but in the complete and absolute freedom and familiarity which insensibly grows up between parents and children who are always together. He, when he was with them, was always a little bit afraid of spoiling them, and they on their part were always a little bit in awe of him. Possibly his impetuous nature, and the quickness with which he would be "down upon" anything he did not like, accounted to some extent for this, though the impression thus caused would invariably be removed at once by the return of his sweet smile and the gentle explanation which followed. Of his treatment of his children, a capital picture is drawn by the same lady :

“The one thing that impressed me most deeply in his love for you all was his strong sense of your need of discipline, and the firmness with which he always maintained it in spite of your being so young and his having so short a time with you. I think he feared being either too indulgent or too severe, but to me this side of his love was very impressive. He once said to me quite sadly: ‘I fear my children will only remember me as a big playfellow.’ I don’t know what I answered, I only know that to me his treatment of you was a deep lesson, and that all my life long I shall feel that my belief in ‘the Fatherhood of God’ owes much of its strength and clearness to the exhibition of his fatherly love and care for you. . . . Two pictures of his dealing with his children’s faults come before me, both connected with the same child. Once, when first he came, we were all sitting in the drawing-room at Bishop Abraham’s. I was in a low easy chair, with my feet a little stretched out. One of you little girls stumbled over them, and your father told you to say, ‘I beg your pardon.’ These words were exceedingly repugnant to you, and you utterly refused. He could not of course pass it over, but in a room full of people it was not an easy matter to insist. However, insist he did. He picked you up in his arms, and standing in front of me dictated the following speech: ‘I’m a very heavy little personage, and I came down on your toes like a cartload of bricks, and I humbly beg your pardon.’ This you had to repeat bit by bit, and every one laughed except poor you and I; but when it had been done with many sobs you were kissed and comforted, and it was all said with his arms holding you tightly. The other time was a sterner rebuke. He overheard a piece of childish rudeness and was really angry, but, as soon as you had apologised, in your own words this time, he once more picked you up and let you sob out your grief in his arms.”

His love of, and power with, children, was a

marked feature of his whole life. References have already been made to the happy way he had of dealing with the boys and girls in Norfolk Island. It will not be out of place to quote just one or two more here. In 1888 there was a severe epidemic of meningitis in the school, and he wrote to his mother as follows :

“Meanwhile we have to try and keep up the boys’ spirits in every way, and if you had seen my small class this morning you would not have thought they were very bad. I have a long stick with which I whack them in fun, and they all love this stick dearly. If I leave my class in another room one of them is sure to appear with it, and if it is mislaid another makes its appearance next school unfailingly. Then I have a two-pronged stick of portentous length. Some one proposed breaking off a prong, but the girls rushed at the proposer and said, ‘No, you mustn’t do that: the Bishop likes licking us with two sticks!’ Isn’t it jolly having people like that to deal with?”

In 1881 he was staying in the Island of Mota, and he draws an exceedingly pretty picture of the games of the native children and of his own share in them :

“They have a most excellent form of prisoners’ base which big and little can play at together. . . . I



wish you could see one or two of the lithe little forms. There is one child in particular, about Pearlie's age and size, with a little short petticoat, who is the picture of grace and life. It is quite a study to see her with her eyes open wide, and parted lips, and body all poised to spring back, advancing to challenge the other side. I could not resist one evening as the old nursery feeling came over me, and out I rushed to join them. It was such a pleasure to the chicks. Those opposite made a dead set at me at once, while my side, and especially the young girl aforesaid, took pride in nursing me through the intricacies of the game. One little dot set her whole heart on catching the Bishop, and was always after me when I tried to get out. I tried hard to humour her, but could not manage it gracefully. The children are simply marvellous in their good temper. Palmer and I have been examining all the schools. . . . The children, when they pass creditably, get a piece of print for a petticoat, and 'it was pretty' to see them sitting about under the trees sewing them (very badly, I must confess). . . . Fancy the delight, when your only garment is a yard of blue print, in winning another of red stuff, and then making it into a real petticoat, all your own work, with the hem outside, which has to be done again, and then having the whole inspected by the Bishop with much shyness and equal pride. . . . My heart



does go out to meet these little ones, and I think they feel that it does."

Again, after revisiting England, on one occasion he wrote to his mother :

"Well, it is a very great blessing to have been home and have had it all, as it is very humanising and softening. I can see the little children stop and look at me because my eyes look lovingly at them for my chickies' sake, and other children whom I play with make great friends on the strength of my little women at home."

During the last years of his life, when a confirmed cripple, children were a special delight and solace. When in London he would have himself carried into a ward of the Victoria Hospital for Children, and there hold a simple service for them. In Cambridge many little ones still remember his delightful stories. He would gather them round him, no matter how distinguished the rest of the company might be, and begin a yarn—half fairy-tale, half fact gathered during his travels—of which shipwreck and rescue by the aid of wonderful big white birds not infrequently formed part. These stories were too often interrupted (as much to his own annoyance as to that of the children) by some ecclesiastical female who was "simply dying to have a word with the Bishop."

During the short six months he was in England in 1878 and 1879, he was continually in request for sermons and meetings, and spent a great deal of the time, which he would have wished to give to his mother and children, in pleading for the Melanesian Mission. This was a considerable trial, and people were not always very considerate in putting forward claims upon his time. "For all that," says one who saw much of him just then, "I never remember seeing or hearing the slightest trace of impatience or irritation on the subject." Nothing ever seems to have been too great or too small a thing for him to give.

At last the dreaded moment came when he must leave all the love and happiness he had been enjoying and start back for Melanesia. Just at that period of life when the affections are perhaps the strongest—he was only thirty-five—he had to leave *all* whom he loved behind him, for little Stephe was now to remain in England with his sisters. Out there in Norfolk Island there was not one of his own flesh and blood to welcome him—only a quiet grave with its cross of flowers. No wonder he wrote to Mr. Bill on the voyage of the bitterness of the parting :

"SS. 'GARONNE' (*at sea*), June 25, 1879.

"Many thanks for your letter, which reached me just before I started. I don't know how I got over

the next day, and especially the next night. I felt as if my heart would break in the evening, or my head go. But, thank God, I am all right again now."

To a man with his sunny disposition and love for his fellow creatures the feeling of desolation could not last long. Amongst other things his delight in sailors came to his rescue. Here are some extracts from letters to his mother written on board the *Garonne*.

"June 24, 1879.

"The passengers are a very nice pleasant set, and our prayers are really a sight to behold. To-day I should say we had thirty, or even more. Sang the 'Te Deum' very well. This is most thankworthy. Also the sailors let me go down to them, and we had some forty in the fore-castle last Sunday evening."

"OFF CAPE BREDÁ, July 31, 1879.

"I was seeing the sick wife of one of our passengers (the same poor woman who lost her two children the other day), and while I was there her little boy came in, and with great triumph produced a paper of sugarplums which had been given him and which was 'for mother.' Then, when he had given them her, he climbed up into the berth and put his arm round her, and got hers coiled round him. It was a

very pretty picture, but I could not help thinking how my boy would never have that most blessed of loves which exist between a mother and her son. You see, mother, I know a great deal of that."

The *Southern Cross* seems to have been sent to meet him, and convey him to the Islands *en route* for Norfolk Island. There is a letter to his mother in which the hunger for a sight of the little ones he had left cannot be suppressed.

"‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*) Sep. 26, 1879.

"I do not know when you thought of moving from Torquay ; still, I should think you would be nearly home by this time, and I look at the little photograph of the ugly house [Mrs. Selwyn's residence in the Close, Lichfield] in its ugly aspect, and think how lovely I should think it if I could see the little faces looking out of the night-nursery window."

He was unfortunate enough to be taken seriously ill with ague just at this time, a fact which he ascribed to having lost his acclimatisation during his visit to England :

*To* MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.

"‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at anchor*), Oct. 18, 1879.

"I have only just begun to think again of writing,

as I had to put my letter away again as I was very poorly, and then out came (what I think had been threatening for a long time, as I never felt so wretched and listless) a bad attack of ague. It was a little more than ague, that is, I never was free from it and had a continual heat and partial delirium."

## CHAPTER XI

### MELANESIA

As has been stated in the Preface, it is not intended here to write a history of the Melanesian Mission, or even of those years when Bishop John Selwyn was at its head. That is left for another hand to do. At the same time it is necessary that some idea should be given of the work he did, and the sort of places he visited, and people with whom he had to do. This shall be divided into two parts : the first, consisting of a number of extracts from letters written at various times and from various places, which may serve to give a general impression of his life in Melanesia ; the second, of an account of one or two of the most important actions and missionary feats accomplished by him during his career.

His reluctance to speak much in his letters about his frequent illnesses, or the gradual undermining of his constitution, has been already mentioned. He was equally reticent concerning the risks he ran on numbers of occasions when landing among strange



and possibly hostile natives. It is certain that, while making as light as possible of such things, he often wrote farewell letters to those he loved in case anything happened to him. These letters were seldom sent, but one will be found, as an example, in the account of his going ashore at Gaieta (Florida) to try to persuade the chief to deliver up the murderers of Lieutenant Bower. One thing is quite certain: he never allowed any one to incur any danger that he was not willing to share, and when possible he would land first *alone*, and take the whole risk himself. These things will come out clearly in the following extracts, as will also the character and habits of the islanders for whose salvation he was working.

*To his MOTHER.*

“MAEWO, *June 26, 1878.*

“I have just come back to such a terrible thing, that it makes one's blood run cold to think of it. I had been for a splendid walk in which all sense of seediness produced by three wet days had passed away, and had come back to find the people had brought me heaps of water, and the old gentleman of the place had come up and drawn me aside to show me three yams he had been digging for me. My boys were boiling the water for tea, my school-children were hanging about waiting for school—altogether it was as simple, bright a little scene as

one wanted to see, when I heard that a woman had died at the next village. They had not told me of her illness, and it was no good going down, so I sat quietly down to tea and entertained an old fellow who had been very civil to me yesterday. All of a sudden one of my boys looked up and said, 'Yes, poor woman!' 'Who?' said I. 'The mother of the woman who died,' said he quietly; 'they have stamped on her and thrown her into the grave, and *she was not dead.*' Can you imagine anything more terrible? All this had been going on not 300 yards from where I was sitting. However, it is not quite so bad as they made out, although bad enough. She had implored them to take her life, as she did not want to survive her daughter, so they bound the living and the dead together, and then trod the mother to death. It is the first time such a thing has been done in this part of the island, though it is common in the southern part. The deed was done by her own sons, and I suppose they thought they did her good service. One can imagine it all. A woman here has very little that makes life worth living at the best of times, and if sorrow is super-added she may well say 'let it end,' even though her creed is nothing after death.

. . . . .

"I am very well, but nearly eaten by mosquitoes, and the rats are something wonderful. They have lived on my biscuits, got a bit of glass out of the

front of the biscuit-box where it was only slightly broken and lived on *that*; and now that I have stopped both these sources of food I am mightily afraid lest they should live on me. If you hear of your son as a second Bishop Hatto, please do not think that it is because I oppress the poor. On the contrary, I had the oldest man hereabouts to tea to-night, and fed him with haricot mutton and biscuit, and heard his story of the coming of the first ship, which they thought was a spirit and brought the ghosts of dead black men, which had shadows that you could see through; and I have bound up four bad legs and one bad neck; so that though I have stowed away the biscuits in a box I don't deserve the fate of the Rhenish Bishop."

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON*

"MORA, Oct. 18, 1880.

"I spent my five weeks while the ship was at Norfolk Island on (to us) new ground at the Torres Islands,—very nice, noisy, simple-minded folk. They were afflicted with a terrible sort of ulcer, principally caused by dirt, but partly, I fancy, by deterioration of blood. It was terrible. One day I dressed thirty-seven bad legs; and there were others so bad that they would not let me touch them, and prepared to die: and, indeed, I could do nothing for them. I think I saved a good many, and the people were very

good, and cleaned up their houses, washed their bandages, and generally kept themselves cleaner. But I longed for Sister Dora's skill and power, and sometimes for her appliances."

This reference to Sister Dora comes naturally from the pen of a Staffordshire man, for though not by birth, yet by all associations, he was closely connected with that county.

From these same Torres Islands he wrote a long letter to his mother, in which he laments that he had not the enthusiasm of his father or of Bishop Patteson, and thanks God for the sense of duty which kept him up to his work. He ends up these thoughts with the following rather pathetic words :

"I think the real truth is that I dislike being Bishop. I shrank from it at first, and the liking has never come. 'But in I am and on I must,' which is what my father would say."

His estimate of himself was full of humility, but lacking in true appreciation. Had the enthusiasm been absent, no amount of mere sense of duty could have carried him forward to the great achievements of his life. Besides which, there is evidence that when incapacitated for the work he realised only too well his devotion to it. The very nature too of his work was such that, unless he had had the true love and ardour for it, he would have never been able to

sustain its vicissitudes. He once said in a letter to his mother that he sometimes compared his life with that of an ordinary bishop, whose interests are usually general rather than particular; whereas there, besides the care of the churches, there was the care, bodily and spiritually, of every individual, and this was never absent from his mind. The following description of a day's work in Florida will illustrate this :

*To MRS. LONG INNES.*

*"BOLI, FLORIDA, Nov. 16, 1881.*

"Shall I tell you what a day is like here? To-day, for instance? Well, I got up at 6.30, and went to my tub, which is behind a screen outside. Thence I yelled to have the bell rung, and then trotted off to school. . . . Here I bothered two girls out of their life by my individual attention to their reading. Then prayers. Then back to breakfast. This is a great event, and really it is very nice save that one gets awfully tired of preserved meat. . . . Before I get to this repast I am seized on by a woman to do her baby's leg, and generally there are two or three other legs and an ear or two. Then I eat, and then I smoke a cigarette, buy anything, settle anything that has to be settled before I get to work. But as the Bishop's house is comfortable and contains sundry good things, people



who are not going to work think it rather a nice place to sit, so in drop two or three friends. Now, they are all very well when I want to learn Florida, but I don't want them in the morning, so I am in a difficulty as I don't like to kick them out. But I generally go out myself; then, when they have evaporated, I slip back, and down goes a mat before my door and my 'oak is sported,' and then to my Greek Testament. To-day the mat was raised and I was summoned to a child in strong convulsions. I wish you had been by, as you would have known what to do. I rushed off with the kettle and mustard, and put the child at once into a hot bath in a bucket. But the fits have been going on all day, and I am afraid it won't live out the night. As the father was a Christian I baptized it. I stayed there a long time and got it a little warmer, but that was all. Then back to my reading, and so till it was so hot and I was so sleepy I could read no more. Then a siesta. Then I woke up and found some boys and went for a good walk. Oh! so pretty along the beach of firm white sand, with overhanging trees, and orchids and ferns on every trunk, and the white surf breaking on the reef outside, and then rolling across the lagoon to break in ripples at your feet. . . . Home, to find that somebody in his zeal had rung the bell on a half-holiday, so the school was all hard at work. Prayers in the open air, as it was nearly dark. Then dinner, and



then two new candidates for baptism to gladden my heart. What do you think of that for a quiet day in the dreaded Solomons?"

This day, as so many others, ended by his writing several sheets of letters, and this addition to his work should always be borne in mind. From the letters to his mother written during this same expedition two extracts must be given as illustrating the feelings and thoughts of the natives on the one hand and of himself on the other:

*To his MOTHER*

"BOLI, FLORIDA, *Sunday, April 2, 1882.*

"What a bore self is! I am always debating about things. How far one is bound to consider oneself: *e.g.*, one takes one's waterproof sheet and a plaid, and hears one of one's small boys shivering next door. Ought one without any hesitation to give him the sheet? I am on a matted floor, mind, and should not get damp, but I may get skin disease. One is always having St.-Martin-of-Tours sort of questions, and I am afraid I do not answer them in his way. In fact, I think the tendency of this life is to make one selfish, as one has to be constantly asserting oneself.

. . . . .

All these people are such beggars. They are to

one another, and they carry it out fully to strangers. Everybody who comes to you is only thinking what he can get. ‘Bishop, this is somebody’s brother,’ ‘Bishop, this is the uncle of a boy at Norfolk Island,’ &c. If it is not begging it is buying, and if it is not buying it is coming into one’s den and making remarks on everything one has got. After a time one can keep people well within bounds, but in newish places one has to live in a constant state of repressing, which is disagreeable. The chiefs are worst of all. I went at the man here the other day. ‘Lifa,’ said I, ‘you went up in my vessel to Norfolk Island the other day, did you not? and you stayed at Norfolk Island, did you not? and you came back again, and you had presents there: how much food had you to buy on board?’ He said, ‘None.’ Then said I, ‘I have been in your country for a fortnight, and you have not sent me a single yam, but have begged everything you could. Is that like a chief? I do not care. I can buy all I want; but chiefs ought to behave as such.’ ”

*To his MOTHER.*

*“BOLI, April 5, 1882.*

“I have been trying to get Good Friday and Easter well observed here, but I am afraid I cannot do much except among the teachers. It is too early yet with these people to get them to mark

days and seasons, when heretofore they have never known what a season meant at all, and one is afraid to make it too much of a yoke. I find also that it is very difficult to get them to understand abstract history, for such the history of our Lord is to them. But all this will come as their minds grow. This week I am trying to make them know the facts, with but little theory, of the death of Christ. That is after all the real Gospel, as I have been reading to-day in a capital book of R. W. Dale's, a Congregationalist, on the Atonement. I wish you would read it, as I think you would like it. The style is very pleasant, and one wonders as one sees how very near they are to us, or rather one sees how broad is the basis and how little is the difference between different schools as to the real bearing of Christianity.

. . . . .

“I wonder whether I wrote to ask you to send the pastoral staff? I should like it to use at functions in our chapel at Norfolk Island—indeed I ought to have had it for the consecration, but I forgot it.”

The above refers to his father's pastoral staff, which was afterwards used at many of the episcopal ceremonies in Melanesia by Bishop John Selwyn.

In 1884 he visited Nukapu in order to set up the cross to mark the place where Bishop Patteson was killed. This could not have been a very easy task,

and required the full exercise of his tact and daring. Here is his brief account :

*To his MOTHER.*

“ ‘SOUTHERN CROSS ’ (*at sea*), Oct. 26, 1884.

“ We got to Nukapu last Saturday, and the chief came out to us at once, and we went in together. I took the engineer in to help me to put up the cross. I was a little bit afraid that the people might be shy at the last moment, but they all manifested the most eager zeal, and dug holes and cleared the ground with great vigour. We put it just in front of the house where Bishop Patteson was killed, at their earnest request, as they said people could see it from the sea. I am afraid they can't very well, as it does not show out much, but it stands very well when you land.”

At this point it is necessary to make a break in these extracts so as briefly to describe what took place in the following year—a year of great importance to the Bishop.

## CHAPTER XII

### HIS SECOND MARRIAGE—RENEWED WORK IN MELANESIA

IN 1885 he paid another visit to England. It was six years since he had seen his daughters, and six years at their time of life meant a great change. His eldest child had been ill, and on his return he took the whole party down to Llanfairfechan, where he obtained a pony cart for their general use, and laid himself out in every way to ensure one of those happy bits of family life which at long intervals brightened him on his way.

There was at this time staying with a married sister in London a Miss Annie Mort, whose home was in Sydney, and whom the Bishop had known in very early days, when with his father and mother he had stayed at her father's house. Later on their acquaintance had been renewed at Alrewas, where Miss Mort and her sister used to spend their holidays at the vicarage when he was curate of that parish. On his return to England in 1885 he went

to see Miss Mort in London, and in a very short time they became engaged, and were happily married on August 11 of that year. It has been said that if he had married again a little sooner his life might have been prolonged, for he became rather reckless about his health, neglecting to take off wet clothes, and being in many ways careless of himself. It was, as may be imagined, a great joy to all who cared for him to know that he had thus taken a fresh lease of happiness of life, and that he would be accompanied to his far-off work by one who would be a helpmeet for him in every way. It was an added gratification when it was found that the second Mrs. John Selwyn was as ready as the first had been to devote herself to the interests of the Mission.

In the following November Bishop and Mrs. John Selwyn sailed for Melanesia, and very shortly after their arrival he must have started on a voyage to the islands, as may be gathered from the following letters. It will be noticed that reference is made in the first of these to a bad foot—a symptom, doubtless, of the trouble to come.

*To his MOTHER.*

“‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*), *Easter Day*, 1886.

“My foot is nearly well, but I have to nurse it a bit, which means sitting down more than I care about.

. . . . .



“There are signs that the old religion is breaking down. C. has had a new house built, and to do this a house belonging to a spirit had to be pulled down. Nobody liked doing this very much, but two of the Christian boys went at it and down it came.

“‘Poor Poian’ (the owner), said old Taki, ‘I am sure he will die.’ He thought the outraged spirit would kill him. However, he didn’t, nor the boys who pulled the house down. And so the other day they were sent for, as being spirit-proof, to remove another spirit’s tree. No religion can long stand this open defiance of it. They believe that any one who offends the spirit will die, and consequently they never have put his power to the proof. But when they find that he can be insulted with impunity they soon cease to believe in him.

. . . . .

“I don’t dare to begin counting the weeks. It is like thinking about the end in a boat-race: nothing does you up so soon or makes the end seem so far. Well, mother dear, I have this advantage over everybody else in this work, that no one has such a mother or such a wife or such children as I have to give up, so I hope I do not offer what costs me nothing.

. . . . .

“*May 8.*—At Boli there was a bad piece of news. Old Takua, the old chief there, and Dikea, his

brother, had made a raid on one of our teacher's people (he was away at Norfolk Island) and driven them away, and then they invaded his house, broke some of the school things, and took away two banners. These, however, they put back. The ostensible reason was that they wanted to punish them for harbouring a young fellow who had offended Dikea, but some of my best teachers told me that Takua had said, 'Let us drive away this new doctrine; we will do some little damage, and then wait and see what happens. If no man-of-war comes and punishes us, then we will attack them more determinedly.'

*To his MOTHER.*

"YSABEL, *Sunday Evening, July 11, 1886.*

"I am here on my way back from visiting the great chief of these parts, who has been and is very ill, and to whom I have just administered a strongish tonic of brandy and quinine, which I find to be a most efficacious remedy (*pace* the teetotalers). My going was one of those little trials which one has to face here—nothing very great in themselves, but with a possibility of consequences which have to be taken into consideration and make one feel grave. Some time ago I went to see him and found him ill with influenza, and gave him some pain-killer, which generally proves efficacious. Last night

when I came back from a long excursion to see a case in the neighbourhood of Tega I heard that he was very ill, and had removed from his own home to an outlying island (this probably to get away from his Tidalo or spirit), *and* that his people said that my medicine was the cause of his sickness. This was serious ; so after church this morning I came away to visit him. My boys came with me without hesitation, though I fancy they thought there might be danger. I wrote to Annie [his wife] last night, and told her why I went. That is the hard part of what we have to do, not the doing it ourselves. I think if we really see our path of duty clear we can commit our souls to God as unto a faithful Creator, and my path was very clear. I had to think of my teachers here, who would be very likely to have my imaginary sin visited on them. But still it is very hard to face probable sorrow for those you love, and I knew what a terrible thing it would be to her, and to you and the chicks—though you all, if you had known, would have told me to go ; so I had much prayer and felt strengthened. When we were half-way on our journey we picked up his brother, who said that whoever originated the report it did not come from Soga himself, as he declared that the Bishop's medicine had done him good. So we found when we reached our destination. He was touched at my coming so far to visit him, and accepted the tonic in a good

spirit. It was a mediæval sight, the administering of it. I mixed it with great gravity, then drank a shell-full myself to show that I meant no harm, then Hugo had a sip, and then the men all round tasted it, and finally the chief had his shell-full. Then Hugo and I held forth, and so came away after a little prayer to God before Soga that He would bless the medicine. And all this for a man who only a month ago attacked and massacred a whole village. And yet I am sure I am right. A chief's death is such a serious matter here, and please God if he gets well I may win his heart. You may imagine that my heart is light to-night. There was no danger, but there might have been, and I had to face the 'might.' "

*To his MOTHER.*

" 'SOUTHERN CROSS' (*at sea*),

" NUKAPU, BEARING S.E. BY E.,

" DISTANCE 1 LEAGUE,

" *Sep. 2, 1886, 7 A.M.*

"There are nice associations in that heading, mother, which I have set down with the precision of Nelson to call your attention to it. It is good for your son to think of you on your seventy-seventh birthday when within sight of the island where one who was like a son to you, and dear to you as one, laid down his life for Christ. I think his death, like the death

of all those who are departed in the faith of Christ and the love of God, has helped me to realise more vividly than before the Communion of Saints and the life of the world to come.

. . . . .

“I always feel that the assurance of the continuity of our Christian life, that the life *here* is the life *there*, is the greatest possible help to try and make the life here a fitting preparation for that which is to come.

. . . . .

“Here is the boat coming off from Nukapu after being ashore for a long time. I did not go in, as I have had a bad cold, and want to keep out of the sun. We have been waiting about outside just as the *Southern Cross* did in '71, but it is all right this time, and the people are as friendly as possible.”

In the autumn of 1886 Mrs. John Selwyn accompanied her husband on one of his cruises.

### *To MRS. A COURT-REPPINGTON.*

“‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*), Oct. 18, 1886.

“I am like a snail and carry my home on my back just now, as, to my intense happiness, and I think hers also, Annie is with me. We have made her very comfortable on board, and her only horror is the cockroaches!”

*To his MOTHER.*

“ ‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*), Nov. 14, 1886.

“I told Pearlie how we met the man-of-war at Port Patteson, and how we went to dinner in state, Annie much exercised at only having a print frock, but looking very nice therein, and I proudly conscious of the fact that I had a white shirt and a decent coat. I wonder if you and my father were ever in similar straits! But we had a very happy visit, and then met again three days afterwards at Santa Cruz. The men-of-war people made themselves extremely agreeable to the Santa Cruzians, and the Captain went ashore with me, so altogether it was a very happy visit, and ought to do good, as they have so often had unfriendly men-of-war.

. . . . .

“Walter Woser’s ordination took place at his own church, but, as all the people round came, that was far too small, so we moved the altar outside, and all the people sat round. It was a very pretty and very solemn sight in the early dawn. There were eighty-six communicants, and we were four clergy.

“After the service we had a bright happy breakfast party in the school, and then Annie and I walked to another church about a mile and a half off, where we had morning prayer, with seventeen candidates for baptism, the first-fruits of a new place.



Then home to rest for a bit, and finally—no, not finally, but last of the services—the Confirmation of thirty-seven candidates at Ava. That, again, we had out in the open air, as the church was too small.

“After dinner a magic lantern with sacred pictures made the end of a tolerably hard day.”

Meantime, of course, the work of the school in Norfolk Island went on, and took up what time the Bishop could spare from the other islands. All his letters concerning this side of his life are full of good cheer and encouragement. He combined many offices in his own person, as, for instance, when he writes that he must close his letter as it was dinner-time, and he had to stand punctually before the door to blow up those who were late!

The following extracts taken at intervals from his correspondence give some idea of his work with the native boys and girls at St. Barnabas' Mission Station.

#### I.

“I have just read an entry in one of my boys journals : ‘This was a very good Sunday, we received the Holy Communion in the morning.’ This is only for himself to see, and I was greatly pleased at it. I think it shows a little that they really do feel the blessings of that holy feast. I wish I could get nearer to them than I do. I think they trust me,

and will come to me in difficulties, and know that I will do anything for them, but I can't keep up a conversation with them and draw them out as some folks can. I talk to them, but they don't talk to me. Nevertheless I am *very* fond of them, and should be much out of my element elsewhere."

## II.

"The school wants pulling up a bit, so I am glad to be here. I can hardly believe that I am to be at home for nearly six months. It is too delightful to think about. And home is so pretty and so nice, and the dear wife fills it all with her presence and her love, and I am very blessed—thankful, I trust, for all God's mercies to me.

"I have just made out rough statistics of our work for the year [1886], which show: Schools, 69; scholars, 1967; Confirmations, 36; Church Consecration, 1; Ordination, 1; teachers, 161; baptisms (adult), 561."

## III.

### *To his ELDEST DAUGHTER.*

"I generally take the girls to teach [preparation for baptism] if I can get them, and when I have them I think of you, and feel as if they were my daughters through you . . . and as if I loved them because I love you so dearly. They are so shy when

they come in to see me, and I have to bend my head down to catch what they say, but they are very much in earnest."

## IV.

"I have a class of catechumens every day. I always begin in the same way: 'Do you really wish for baptism?' 'Yes.' 'Why?' There is the crux, and oftentimes I have to wait a quarter of an hour before I get the answer. But it is generally the right one, and not a stock answer. Little ——, of Santa Cruz, made me the best, I think—very shy but very decided—'To do away with sin.' One girl said 'Mabo,' which is the Florida for 'peace and reconciliation.'"

## V.

"Last night three of the boys came for separate interviews till nearly ten. This is very hard work as they will not speak, so one has to pump up thoughts, and I was so sleepy I could barely think. But the prayer at the end with my arm round the neck of each is very helpful, and I think must assure them that there is an earthly care and love around them as well as the care and love of God."

One specially charming incident must not be omitted. The Bishop was continually trying to teach the Christian grace of unselfish care for others.

To emphasise this he determined on the bold experiment of interesting the boys at the school in those who needed help in far-off lands, just as children in our churches are taught to care for foreign missions. The particular work about which he told them was that carried on by the late Bishop Walsham How in East London. The venture succeeded beyond his furthest hopes, as is witnessed by the following letter :

“NORFOLK ISLAND,

“*Feast of the Epiphany, 1886.*

“MY DEAR BISHOP OF BEDFORD,

“Before I go to bed to-night I should like to write you a line about a matter which has helped me very much, and will, I hope, help you.

“I preached to our boys on Advent Sunday about preparing the way of the Lord, with all its obvious thoughts. . . . Lastly I told them that we must all try not only to do something but to give something for that end. . . . I did not think my words had gone very deep, but a few days afterwards a deputation came in very gravely, and one of our deacons produced a pocket-handkerchief full of silver which the boys had collected among themselves. Poor fellows ! they are not very wealthy, as you may imagine, all they get being for the little things they do for us as gardeners, &c., and their friends at home are such terrible sharks and expect

them to bring back stores for the common weal, so that this represented considerable self-denial on their part. This sum was offered on Christmas Day. . . . Then I asked them what they would do with it. First, they unanimously wished to help white rather than black people, and when I told them of your swarming East End population, their utter poverty, and (what would strike them) the absence of trees and gardens and open air life, they determined to send it you to do what you liked with. It is not much, but I believe it really comes from the boys' hearts. If you have got anything like an orphanage at which they could have a boy, or anything about which somebody could write them a line now and then, I think it would help them. It may help some London boy to think that these far-away Islanders are thinking of him. . . .

“Believe me always

“Your affectionate brother in Christ,

“J. R. SELWYN, *Bp.*”

A case was soon found for the use of this most touching gift, and a little motherless lad whose father had deserted him was enabled by the generosity of his black brothers to be taken into a home and cared for on his discharge from an East End hospital. A letter descriptive of the lad and of the help they had given him was despatched to the boys on Norfolk Island.

These detached instances of Bishop John Selwyn's work both on his voyages in the *Southern Cross* and in Norfolk Island may serve to give some faint notion of his life during his missionary career, while it is hoped that they do not in any way trespass on the ground which is to be occupied by the History of the Melanesian Mission.

It may be possible to summarise the causes of his success in missionary work. There was, first, the complete and generous self-surrender without which the rest would have availed little. This comes out in every detail of his life from the day when he offered himself to Melanesia under the influence of the death of Bishop Patteson. Then there was his power of inspiring the natives with an absolute trust in him. To this he paid great attention, taking infinite care to carry out his smallest promise. Thus, if he had, when leaving a place, said that he would call there on his way back, *nothing* prevented his doing so. The winds might be adverse, and many days' delay might be incurred : there might be no special reason for going except that he had said he would do so ; but he considered it well worth while in order that the natives might know that what he said, that he did. Another element in his success was his carefulness about details. This must have been particularly difficult to him, for he was naturally careless in his dress and untidy in his habits, but in his life in the islands and on board the *Southern Cross*



he was strictness itself as to neatness and orderliness. When Mrs. J. R. Selwyn accompanied him on a voyage in the schooner she was one day unable to find him anywhere on board, and at last discovered him in a far corner of the hold teaching some boys how to scrub the floor, because he had noticed that it had been badly done. It was the same on Norfolk Island. When he came back everything tightened up, because he used to go about perpetually, seeing that the whole place was kept clean and tidy. Lastly, there was the power of a Christian life lived openly in close contact with them all, which could not fail to influence the native mind.

That he was a *muscular* Christian added, no doubt, to this effect, for the Melanesians greatly admired his physical strength and skill as they saw it exercised in navigating or hauling up a boat, or in any of the numerous ways in which he was able to show them that he was a strong man. His courage, too, was often in evidence, and deeply impressed them with the admiration felt by every human being for a really brave man. But his essentially Christian character bore its fruit, too, though sometimes it may have been long in ripening. Here is a beautiful story to illustrate this. There was a boy at Norfolk Island who had been brought from one of the rougher and wilder islands, and was consequently rebellious and difficult to manage. One day Mr. Selwyn (it was before his consecration) spoke to him about

something he had refused to do, and the lad, flying into a passion, struck him in the face. This was an unheard-of thing for a Melanesian to do. Mr. Selwyn, not trusting himself to speak, turned on his heel and walked away. The boy was punished for the offence, and, being still unsatisfactory, was sent back to his own island without being baptized, and there relapsed into heathen ways.

Many years afterwards Mr. Bice, the missionary who worked on that island, was sent for to a sick person who wanted him. He found this very man in a dying state and begging to be baptized. He told Mr. Bice how often he thought of the teaching on Norfolk Island, and, when the latter asked him by what name he should baptize him, he said, "Call me John Selwyn, because he taught me what Christ was like that day when I struck him, and I saw the colour mount in his face, but he never said a word except of love afterwards." Mr. Bice then baptized him, and he died soon after.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MISSIONARY ADVENTURES

It remains to give one or two of the chief missionary adventures brought to a successful issue by Bishop John Selwyn.

The first of these occurred very early in his episcopate, when in 1878 he succeeded in obtaining a footing on some of the small islands in the Santa Cruz Archipelago. He was accompanied on this occasion by Mr. Still and Mr. Penny, each of whom has written a graphic account of his experiences. Mr. Still says :

“After Bishop Patteson had been killed at Nukapu, and the place afterwards shelled by a man-of-war, all intercourse with this group was at an end. The natives were fiercely hostile to the white man, and it would have been useless to attempt a landing anywhere. The only thing to be done was to wait patiently until in some way an opportunity was afforded of visiting them in a friendly way. And the opportunity came about in this way. In 1877 Bishop John Selwyn, on visiting Malanta, found that two men from the Santa Cruz group had been cast away there, and were being

held as prisoners. With much difficulty he managed to buy one of them, and returned him to his home in the Santa Cruz group. This gave just the opening so long waited for, and the following year the Bishop determined to visit these islands and try to get on a friendly footing with the natives. On May 5, 1878, the *Southern Cross* was running slowly through the group with a nice breeze, hoping that as she went along some of the natives would come off in their canoes. The first canoe, with two men, came out from Panavi; they were very shy, and could hardly be induced to come near the ship, but after a good deal of coaxing the Bishop managed to get them near enough to hand them a few pieces of hoop iron, and off they went. We then stood nearer in, and several canoes, encouraged by the success of the first, came off to see us. One came alongside, when, owing to the roll of the ship and a nasty job on the sea, it very nearly filled, so that two out of the three men in it jumped on to the ship's ladder, and left the third man to bale out. I induced the younger of the two to venture as far as to look down through the skylight, but he would go no further.

“The Bishop made them a present, which encouraged two more men from another canoe to stand on the ladder and receive presents; but not one would come any further.

“After this, we ran along the coast of Lomlom to Nufiloli, where two canoes came out, and hailed us in a friendly manner. As we stood nearer in to the land, we were met by quite a fleet of canoes—twenty-three in all—some with three and some with two men in them. Kesi, the Nufiloli chief—a fine, dignified man—came on board and seemed to understand that we were come as friends, as he knew Tuponu, the man whom the Bishop had bought at Malanta. After the Bishop had made him a present of an axe, the chief and his friends left us, and we stood out to sea for the night.

“The next morning, after a beat with a stiff breeze

against a strong westerly set, we fetched in to leeward of the small island of Nimanu, where canoes came off in greater numbers than the day before, and a smart trade was carried on in native ornaments and mats. They were very eager traders, hoop iron being in great demand. There was a nasty sea on, and several canoes were swamped alongside ; however, the men seemed to care very little about that ; they swam about, first picking up their floating things, and then, taking hold of one end of the canoe, worked it quickly backwards and forwards until most of the water was out of it, and then got in and baled out the rest.

“After a short stay we ran down to Nufiloli, and hove to off the reef. There was a nasty sea on, but several canoes came off to us at once, and Kesi, the chief, brought the Bishop a present of a pig, which was quite acceptable.

“As all seemed so friendly the Bishop made up his mind to land and pay a visit to the village, and I was told to get the boat ready. I picked out four of the most trustworthy of our boys for a crew, and lowered the boat, into which the Bishop, with Kesi and another man, got, and we rowed them to the reef. The Bishop and his two friends landed on the reef, which was alive with hundreds of natives all very excited, and then started off to walk across the lagoon to the island some three-quarters of a mile away. We pulled our boat off about thirty yards from the reef and lay on our oars waiting. We were soon surrounded by canoes whose occupants were eager to trade, and wanted all we had in the boat—rowlocks, rudder-lines, or anything they could lay hands on. With considerable difficulty we persuaded them to leave us for the ship, where they might trade to their hearts’ content.

“For two long hours we waited, anxiously straining our eyes in the direction of the island to see something of our Bishop, and hoping that all was going well. One could not help thinking of Bishop Patteson as we sat there in the same



boat that had taken him in on his last journey, waiting for our Bishop, just as Joseph Atkin and his native crew had waited for theirs, whom they were not to see alive again. However, we fared well, for the natives this time seemed quite friendly and good-humoured, and by-and-by we spied the Bishop returning across the lagoon in a canoe, as the tide had now risen considerably. One could see the anxiety clear away at once from the faces of the boat's crew as they rowed in with a will to bring the Bishop off. He had had a most satisfactory visit, and had been well treated by all. An immense crowd had now collected on the reef from Nufiloli, Lomlom, and Pileni, all men; no women or children were to be seen. We hoisted our boat sail, and went off to the ship with light and thankful hearts, dragging after us a tail of six canoes. The Bishop now determined to land at Pileni close by, as so many of the natives of that island had come over, and seemed quite friendly and anxious for a visit. It was Penny's turn this time to take the Bishop ashore, and a very lively time they had of it."

Mr. Penny now takes up the story : he says :

"It was towards evening, and, as we coasted along a huge fringing reef, looking for an opening, canoes from the shore followed us; but their occupants, though keenly anxious to trade, were uncertain of our intentions and afraid to trust themselves on board the ship. Presently we rounded a point and sighted a tiny islet, that corresponded to a minute arc of the reef's circumference, and we made out an indentation in the white line of foam where a flotilla of canoes lay sheltering from the swell and break of the rollers, and on the coral rocks a crowd of figures were grouped. The little island, we knew, was called Pileni—just such another as Nukapu hard by—and the spot we had sighted, the captain thought, was fit to land at from a boat.

"As we rowed away from the ship the canoes came out



to meet us, and turning accompanied us to the shore. As we neared the landing-place they crowded round the boat so that our crew could with difficulty get their oars into the water, some of the natives scrambling on board and talking at the top of their voices. The din they set up was simply deafening, and we couldn't make out a word of their language and had to trust to signs. One man, I remember, as he bawled at the Bishop, kept drawing a finger from ear to ear across his throat. He wanted a necklace, we subsequently discovered, though the action was suggestive of another desire. My Solomon Islanders, who formed our boat's crew, I could hear from their remarks, didn't like the situation, and the Bishop agreed with me afterwards that at the time we had shared their opinion. The natives, we found, meant only friendship, and they were simply wild with excitement at seeing us, but they were just children of nature, liable to be swayed by any passing wave of feeling, and we couldn't in the least tell what they were going to do next.

"The Bishop determined to land, so leaving me to look after the boat and entertain those of our new friends who preferred to keep me company, he accepted a back from a stalwart native and was carried through the surf to the shore. I fancy I see the scene as I write—the sandy beach and the dense foliage beyond it glowing with the golden light of the evening sun—the crowd of natives splashing through the shallow water of the lagoon, and the Bishop's white helmet and grey flannel shirt, as his head and shoulders appeared above the throng that bore him towards some houses among the trees. I confess that when I saw the Bishop come out of those houses I felt profoundly thankful. The uneasiness we both felt on this occasion was rather strange—we never could quite explain it; for we were more than once together in a really tight situation without such anxiety. Perhaps the sight of Nukapu in the offing affected us, and the reflection that the two sets of circumstances—up to a certain

point—were curiously alike, Patteson landing just as I have described Selwyn's landing, entering a house and being clubbed there, while a shower of arrows from the men on the reef struck down Joe Atkin as he minded the boat.

“The Bishop's landing set the natives very much at their ease, they were less rough and noisy, and our only difficulty was to get them out of the boat, for night was coming on and we could not take a party on board and return them to Pileni before dark. So we made signs to them to follow us in their canoes, which some did. And these enterprising ones profited largely by their confidence in us, for they sold their possessions and went home jubilant and loaded with good things. So ended our first visit to Pileni. The Mission has a good school there now.”

Mr. Still, continuing the narrative, says :

“There was a feeling of much thankfulness on board that night that this first visit had passed off so successfully, and that the door had apparently been once more opened. The next morning we were close down upon Nukapu where Bishop Patteson was killed, and the question was whether it would be wise for the Bishop to attempt a landing, or be satisfied with a visit from the natives if they would come off in their canoes.

“We sailed round to leeward of the reef and hove to. With a glass we could see a number of people on the beach, who were waving to us and holding up green branches. Presently canoes began to put out into the lagoon and paddle towards us. We counted ten afloat ; some of the more venturesome came through the break in the reef and paddled towards us. We beckoned them on, and the leading canoe with a pig on board, which they carefully made to squeak loudly while a good way off to show that they were friendly and only bringing food, came close up alongside the ship. We bought their mats and bags, which emboldened one of the men to come up the ladder and sit on the rail. Then feeling that we were really

friendly he solemnly rubbed noses first with the Bishop, and then with me, and presented us each with an arrow. He seemed very nervous, and was evidently much relieved when once more safe in his canoe. By this time the rest of the canoes had come alongside, and a brisk bartering was going on. The chief Moto was off, and asked us to come ashore, which the Bishop said he would do if two of their men stayed on board the ship. They were all the time constantly affirming that the land was a good one. 'Fenua lavui' was repeated over and over again as though they were conscious that they had a bad name with us. It was now that the question of going ashore had to be decided. The Bishop was anxious to go. Penny and I tried to persuade him not to. We strongly recommended him to be satisfied with so friendly a beginning for the present, and on a future visit to go ashore if he then thought right. He left the deck and went below into the cabin, and presently I looked down through the skylight, and there saw the Bishop on his knees, with that strong earnest look upon his face which we all knew so well, asking God to direct him in this matter. Whilst he was thus praying the canoes all cleared off and went back to the island, so that when he came on deck again the disappearance of the canoes settled the question. The natives of this island were at that time evidently most nervous and suspicious, and there can be no doubt that it would have been unwise, and running an unnecessary risk, to have tested them too severely on that first occasion."

The promptness and foresight shown by the Bishop in purchasing the freedom of Tuponu and using this man as an introduction to hitherto hostile islanders cannot be too highly commended. It showed that he was able to combine diplomacy with boldness and self-sacrifice. The incident of the Bishop praying in

his cabin is just characteristic of his whole life. It will be remembered that even as a child his "prayerfulness" was noted; no wonder that on expeditions such as the above, when few were with him and many against, he is found often upon his knees.

Two years later he was able to carry out a still greater enterprise. It was through this intercourse with the Reef Islands in the Santa Cruz Archipelago that he succeeded in 1880 in getting a footing on the dreaded Santa Cruz itself.

The Bishop's own journal shall give the account of this event, the most important, perhaps, in the whole of his career.

"We left Norfolk Island in the *Southern Cross* on June 29, and on July 5 stopped at Neugone to pick up the Rev. Mano Wadrokai and his wife, who had been for a short holiday at their own home there. . . . On July 20 we were off the Reef Islands, and were soon boarded by our friends from Nufiloli and Pileni. I went in with our visitor, Mr. Coote, to Nufiloli, and showed him what sort of a place a man can live in if he chooses. . . . Previously to this we had a long consultation about going to Santa Cruz with the vessel. Would they take us over and introduce us? They all jumped at the idea, and thought it was a most delightful thing to be carried over in safety in our big ship. . . . In the evening I had to break to them that I wanted to go to Santa Cruz,

that Wadrokai might be stationed there. This was, as I expected, a great blow to them, and they said at first it could not be. [This was because they did not want to lose the services of Wadrokai, who had been stationed on their islands.] When I promised that the vessel when it came to Santa Cruz should always come and see them, adding (somewhat craftily) that they could always ensure this by letting us have some boys from their islands, they assented cordially and worked most heartily with us.

“We found that the place they were going to take us to was Leluovu, about the middle of the northern face of the island. It was well adapted for our purpose, as it is separated by about five miles from the bay where Commodore Goodenough was killed, and about the same distance from Graciosa Bay, where the attack was made on Bishop Patteson in 1864.

“We kept a good way off till we could stand in at right angles to the shore, avoiding thereby running along the coast and being followed by a fleet of canoes from every village that we passed. . . . About two miles off from the shore a whole fleet of canoes came out to us, but at first were very shy and would not come near, but directly they saw our Reef Islanders and heard their story the whole scene changed. With one accord they made a rush at us, and climbed up the side unarmed in the most perfect confidence. . . . Then they became clamorous for us to go



ashore. Wadrokal and I went in as pioneers. . . . Of course I was a little nervous as to what might happen, as there had been so many mishaps on shore on this island, but everything, thank God, went perfectly smooth, and the chiefs showed the most entire confidence in us.

“When we got ashore we had to go through the usual ceremony of sitting in the club-house and having presents, and we then talked about Wadrokal’s staying. They were all delighted ; and Meti, the second chief, promised him a new house at once, and forthwith carried him off to see it. Mesa, the head chief, meanwhile carried me off to his own abode, a little collection of huts surrounded by a stone wall, where I was introduced to his wives and fed by them. Then we went on board again to pack up Wadrokal and his wife, and at 3 took them in, Mr. Coote and Mr. Comins accompanying us. . . . Then we bade good-bye to Wadrokal and his wife with a very fervent prayer for their safety and usefulness. I was very proud of them as I left them standing alone on the beach in the midst of so many strangers. . . . And so we went on board, accompanied to the last by Mesa, the chief, who came off in my boat totally unarmed. It was a day to be thankful for, as we have tried so long to get a footing there. Bishop Patteson went to Nukapu that he might use it as a stepping-stone, and was killed there. Commodore Goodenough also fell in trying



to open up the way,—and now the way has been opened to us, by the bringing back the cast-away islanders to their home, and they in turn have introduced us to their friends. May God give us grace to use this opening to His honour and glory.”

Two extracts from letters are given here ; the first giving Bishop Selwyn’s own opinion on the exploit, the second, that of his mother and of Dr. Codrington :

*To MRS. À COURT-REPINGTON.*

“ ‘ SOUTHERN CROSS ’ (*at sea*), *Aug. 25, 1880.*

“ We have got a footing on Santa Cruz at last. This is most thankworthy, and I am greatly pleased at it. Perhaps there is a little spice of vanity in my pleasure, as my friends all accuse me of being hot-headed and impetuous, and I did work this business with such extreme caution that I hope they will now acquit me. But really things have worked wonderfully well for us, under God’s direction, I trust.”

*To MRS. À COURT-REPINGTON from MRS. SELWYN.*

“ THE CLOSE, LICHFIELD, *Dec. 22, 1880.*

“ You heard of the landing at Santa Cruz. It was a great venture of faith. Mr. Codrington says: ‘ For the Bishop’s courageous and discreet management of this great missionary

feat we cannot be too thankful. The present success is, I think, the greatest in that way that remained to be accomplished, for there is no other place that ever was anything like so difficult of access. *Deo laus sit.* To which I say, ‘Amen,’ rejoicing that his dear father’s son walks in his steps.”

In the following year Bishop John Selwyn undertook, and brought to a successful conclusion, another difficult, dangerous, and delicate business. This was nothing less than landing at Florida to induce the chiefs of the tribes implicated to give up the murderers of Lieutenant Bower and his boat’s crew. He was probably the only man who could have done this, and his action no doubt saved the whole of the Florida Islanders from war. On his way he paid another visit to Santa Cruz, accompanied this time by Mr. Alan Lister Kaye, who with Mrs. Lister Kaye had been doing good work in the Mission for several years.

*To* REV. F. E. WATERS.

“ ‘SOUTHERN CROSS’ (*at sea*), OFF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS,  
“ May 9, 1881.

“ Please observe the date, and remember that it was at this time that you and I were in full swing at St. George’s ten years ago. How time flies, doesn’t it? I have good reason to remember this very day, as it was the day when you may remember

Miss Innes came over from Alrewas, with Mrs. Walsh, and consented to be my wife. Dear old place, with all its ups and downs one remembers it as a very bright spot in one's life, and I hope you will always think that I remember you especially in it.

. . . . .

"We are just going up into Still's old district, and then I go on to Florida, where things are not in a pleasant state. You will have heard of the massacre of the boat's crew of a man-of-war, and, perhaps, have heard that that took place at a district where we have got more hold than in any other part of Florida. I hope our people who live inland had nothing to do with it, but the people on the coast undoubtedly had, and a man-of-war has been down there since, so matters are complicated. However, I do not think that there is any danger for us, as the place is so divided up into districts, under separate chiefs, that we can live in one without being exposed to any danger from any other.

"We have just been to Santa Cruz, and Kaye and I slept ashore there. We found everything going on very smoothly. . . . You would have been amused to see a school of thirty-six drawn up in excellent line to receive us, and hardly boasting any clothing. This, however, is more from custom and rule than anything else, as a boy does not put on his clothes till he attains a certain age and kills a pig."

To C. BILL, Esq.

“BUGOTU, YSABEL ISLAND, SOLOMON ISLANDS,

“July 27, 1881.

“When we got near this part of the world, going by a small island where there is a good anchorage, we were brought up by a gun from a vessel we could just see lying there, which turned out to be the *Cormorant* sent down to punish the murderers of Lieutenant Bower [of the *Sandfly*]. I knew the Captain [Bruce], and so we consulted together, as the island, and especially the district where Bower was murdered, is one of our principal stations. I offered to see the chiefs and get them to surrender the principal men concerned if they would. He came on after me, and we met at Florida. There I went to see the chief concerned, who, I was glad to find, was not actually implicated, though he went very near the wind. The actual murderers were only five! They saw the boat land without any ship being near, and started incontinently to attack it. Fancy an armed boat's crew being done to death by five fellows armed with tomahawks, three of them boys. But they had left all their arms in the boat, and were attacked when bathing and the Captain at a distance. We had no end of negotiations, and I put great pressure on the chiefs all round, as Bruce said that he should hold the whole group respon-

sible if the men were not surrendered. So first of all the leading man was sent in, and was shot on the island where he committed the murder. Then I went over to Kalikona again and got him to surrender his son, nearly all the things that were in the boat, *and* poor Bower's skull. . . . After this Bruce went away for a bit, and when he came back they brought another man, the actual murderer of Bower, who was hung . . . . It was, as you may imagine, rather horrid work having to go in for all this murderer hunting, but I am quite sure I was right in doing it, as it saved the whole people from war, and also gave them and all the islands round a very salutary lesson."

It was on this occasion that he wrote one of the farewell letters to which reference has been made. There was, of course, a most unsettled feeling among the islanders, and it was extremely doubtful, in view of their excitement and dread of punishment, how they would receive him. Here is the letter he wrote at the supreme moment, just before going ashore :

*To his* MOTHER.

"OFF GAIETA, FLORIDA, *May* 16, 1881.

"DEAREST MOTHER,

"I write you a little line to tell you of my fondest love and gratitude to you. I am going ashore

at Gaieta to see Kalikona, the man who is partly responsible for the murder of the man-of-war's boat's crew. I have been trying to save the Florida people from being made jointly responsible for it, and now I am going to try and induce Kalikona to give up the actual murderers. I do not think there is the slightest danger, but still there might be, and so I write this line.

“You will like to know if anything happens to me that I was trying to do my duty, and that I believe with all my heart in the love of God our Saviour, though I am sadly conscious how often and how grievously I have sinned against that love.

“Kiss my darlings from me, and let them know how fondly I loved them; and tell them that the love of God alone can make life bright and death easy. You know what my love to you is: it grows greater every year.

“Your most loving, grateful, and dutiful son,

“J. R. SELWYN,

“*Missionary Bishop.*”

Then when all was well over, he adds a postscript:

“*May 20.*—You may like this, so I send it.”

In a subsequent letter to his mother (undated) he adds the following particulars:

“I sent a message to Kalikona, the implicated



chief, to say that I would meet him alone if he would come and see me. Accordingly I went in to Gaieta, and we met on the beach. It was like an old mediæval meeting, as he had his armed following, and Sepi's Christian friends were also armed and stood on my side, while Kalikona and I met on the open beach midway between the two. I gave him the Captain's message that he must surrender the men, and after a long confab he agreed to it. . . . And now good-bye, dearest mother. What can I tell you of these thirty-seven years that are gone? [This makes it probable that the letter was written on his birthday, May 20, 1881.] Only that that is the number by which my love for you is multiplied. My manhood does not cling to you a whit less than my infancy did, and I lean on you just as lovingly now with all the force of reason and love as I did by instinct when I first lay in your arms as a little child."

This last extract summarises the character of the man. It was the marvellous combination of courage and manliness with a tenderness and love more commonly ascribed to the nature of woman, which supplied the power and attraction of his personality.

While engaged on this exploit at Gaieta he saw much of Captain (now Admiral) Bruce, who speaks of his conduct of the business with the greatest

admiration. He also relates how when on board the man-of-war the Bishop preached magnificently to the sailors. He would stand at the wheel and speak to the men, and then would sometimes turn round and with flashing eye address the officers behind him.

Nothing has been said as to the general appearance of Bishop John Selwyn on his missionary tours. Possibly his dress might shock some of the clergy who pin their faith on a rigidly ecclesiastical attire! Certain it is that he would wade ashore and preach in a sun-helmet, with his feet bare, and on one occasion was barefooted even on the platform in a church where he and Dr. Codrington were taking service. But the warm heart and the flashing eye were there, and the man was the man "for a' that."

## CHAPTER XIV

### LAST YEARS IN MELANESIA

DURING the last few years of his work in Melanesia more than one endeavour was made to tempt him to other sees. In 1886 he wrote to his mother :

“I am glad the Bishopric of Melbourne is filled up. My friends have been persistently saying that it was offered to me. I fancy myself following Bishop Moorhouse ! No : I can do the work here after a fashion, *et ‘j’y suis et j’y reste,’* as MacMahon said.”

Again in 1889 he wrote :

“Would you like me to be Bishop of Tasmania ? They rather fished as to my willingness to accept it. . . . It was tempting, as they are such nice hearty people ; but poor Melanesia ! who would care for my people there ? They know me and trust me, and I will stick to them as long as I can. Whether my

bronchitis will allow me is quite another question, as it comes and goes in a fitful sort of way, and is by no means well yet."

His forecast was correct. Early in that year his health became so much broken that he and Mrs. John Selwyn left for Italy *en route* for England. His health really began to fail in 1888. In the earlier part of that year he was at Norfolk Island, where his house was some three minutes' walk from the school buildings. He had to go across many times a day and seemed always to feel fagged. He would look across at the school and say, "Crossing our field seems like half a mile, I am always so tired now." Sometimes he didn't seem up to it, and his class would come to him. When he returned from a voyage to the islands in December of that year, Mrs. Selwyn went with him to New Zealand for the Synod. There the rest of the bishops were so much struck by his worn appearance, that, without even speaking to him about it, they wrote him a most kind letter, signed by them all and headed by the Primate (Bishop Harper of Christchurch), begging him to go at once to England for a thorough rest and urging it on him as a duty. He hesitated a good deal because he had returned from England so lately, but in the end he was over-persuaded, and undertook the journey home. His two daughters with their governess met them in Italy,

and they all spent some time together in Rome, where he recovered greatly from his bronchitis and managed to do a great deal of sight-seeing.

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

“HOTEL VICTORIA, ROME, *May 10, '89.*

“You will be surprised to hear from me here, unless some one has told you that I was most unexpectedly sent home by my brother Bishops. I am trying to get rid of my bronchitis, which has been troublesome for a year, and might become chronic.”

He arrived in England in June, and made a stay of six months, during which time Dorothy, the eldest child of his second marriage, was born. In the following January he with Mrs. Selwyn and the baby started back again in the ss. *Pekin*, spending some little time in Egypt on the way. It is to be feared that he had not completely got rid of his bronchitis, and he was also suffering from the result of a sharp attack of influenza, for in a note sent ashore just before the ship sailed he says :

“I am really much better : my bronchitis is hardly bothering at all.”

From every stopping-place he sent home most characteristic letters to his daughters. Here are

one or two extracts which show him the same cheery, child-loving man as he had been twenty years before.

‘Your godchild [the baby] is in great form. I am head nurse in the afternoon, and it is quite pretty to see how she likes my strong arms, lies down in them quite contentedly when (and this is the point) she has been crying with other folks, and then goes off to sleep to the tune of ‘The British Grenadiers.’ She is a great duck.”

From Gibraltar he wrote describing with great glee an altercation between a native cabdriver and a private of the South Staffordshire Regiment, the latter being the possessor of a pair of black eyes, which the Bishop did not consider a credit to the county!

At Brindisi he and Mrs. Selwyn went for a walk, in the course of which, he says :

“We were going over to the other side of the Harbour by the ferry, but a small boy came along, and asked with a sweet smile whether we wanted a boat, so we took him. . . . He was wonderfully struck with my knowing all about the sail, and said, ‘Why, he is a sailor !’”

After a slow progress the little party arrived back



at Norfolk Island, and the Bishop seemed more like his old self than he had done for some time, and he stayed there quietly until the following July, when he started on a voyage to the islands.

He kept pretty well till the middle of October, when he began to have very painful boils or abscesses in his leg. These were accompanied by what he described as severe rheumatism, and for the rest of his visit to the islands until the ship picked him up in the Banks Islands on November 15 it was only with great pain and difficulty that he could get from place to place. Walking on the coral reefs seems to have distressed him much and added to his suffering. This was practically the beginning of the end as far as his Melanesian work was concerned. The pain prevented him from sleeping at nights, and he became really seriously ill. His journal letter to Mrs. J. R. Selwyn, dated Maewo, November 27, is most pathetic, and is of special interest as giving an account of the last days' work he was ever to do in his beloved islands.

“I have had ten very hard days. I got down to the boat from Zehartob fairly well, and so to Pun, where O. did the school and Harvey Tagalad and I examined the Baptismal candidates. Then I baptized eight of them, and got back dead beat. Next day examined the schools at Milwoa and Wole, and then that at Totoglag, and so home. [These are all

places in Motalava.] Rheumatism very bad, and very little sleep. Next day ship came and we got into Mota at dark. I could just crawl up the hill, and next day locomotion was very bad, but I managed all the near schools. Then I addressed the Confirmation candidates, and after tea confirmed them. I sat down all the time. Next day crawled on board, and oh ! I have been bad since. Could not sleep, and could only just crawl on deck. I am rather better now, but I can't sit up for more than a quarter of an hour without feeling very done, and I can't sleep much yet. I hope I shan't shock you as a cripple when I arrive. I simply long for home. The days and nights seem endless, and rheumatism makes one 'blue,' so that I see all sorts of difficulties about everything."

The Rev. Leonard P. Robin, who accompanied him on this voyage, adds the following touching details :

"The Bishop held a Confirmation at the head station [in Mota]. He got through with difficulty, and one could see the intense effort it was. His exhortations, however, were as spiritual, as manly, and as earnest as any I ever heard him give. He was terribly fatigued afterwards, and said when he sank upon a stretcher in the Mission-house, 'That's the hardest bit of work I've ever done in Melanesia.' The next morning we prepared to leave. I had ague, and was in the preliminary shivering stage when we went down to the beach. The Bishop was in such pain that he could not put his foot to the ground, and had to be half carried down the steep rough

path to the rocks by the seashore, where we waited for the boat to come in from the *Southern Cross* \* to take us off. They spread his small mattress on the rocks for him, and he lay on it leaning against his bundle of pillows and rugs. Presently he looked round and said, 'Where's Robin? He's got ague, poor fellow. Take him the mattress and tell him to lie on it. I can do quite well with this'—touching his bundle of rugs.

"We soon got on board, but he seemed to grow worse instead of better; so, after watering the ship at Maewo, it was decided to call nowhere else, but to make straight for Norfolk Island. He was soon unable to climb into his berth, and had his mattress spread on the cabin deck. One day I was lying on one of the long seats in the cabin: it was my ague day, and it was on me in full force. I think I was only half awake or semi-conscious, and no doubt my breathing was loud and rapid. Presently I noticed a shuffling sound, and looking round saw the Bishop clinging to the table and making his way round to me. He came and put his hand on my forehead and said, 'You've got a pretty stiff bout this time, old boy, haven't you? Wait a bit: I'll get you something.' I begged him to go and lie down, but he would not. He made his way to the medicine-chest and mixed and brought me a dose. I drank it, and he took the glass, put it back, and then sank down upon his mattress with a sigh of relief. The story needs no comment but this—what wonder that we loved him?"

From this point Mrs. J. R. Selwyn takes up the story: she says:

"After this he became too ill to write more, and was finally brought ashore on December 10, 1890, lying on a mattress at

\* This is the last time he was ever on board this Mission ship, which had been built mainly at the cost of himself and Mrs.

the bottom of the boat, looking a perfect wreck. He did not leave his bed for eight months. The intense pain and sleeplessness continued, and after some time the doctors discovered a terrible abscess in his thigh, which had burrowed in every direction. It was doubtless this which he had thought was rheumatism. The doctors said that the cause of it was hard living and exposure when he was in a low state of health. For six months he suffered the most terrible agony from neuritis caused by the abscess. To this sleeplessness was added, and his only relief was gained from morphia. He could not move his position in the least, and all sorts of complications added to his sufferings. [He had to endure a terrible operation at this time, pieces of bone being removed by the doctors from his leg. This he endured with his usual cheerfulness and pluck.] Had it not been for the skill and devotion of Dr. Metcalfe and Dr. Welchman, together with his own wonderful courage and patience and almost unfailing good spirits, he could never have recovered. Dr. Welchman was a member of the Melanesian Mission, and Dr. Metcalfe was the medical man in charge of the Norfolk Islanders. Admiral Lord Charles Scott very kindly sent down a man-of-war, once to bring air-pillows for my husband, and twice more to see if he could be brought to Sydney. [The first of these occasions was the very day that Mary, the second child of Mrs. J. R. Selwyn, was born, and the Bishop and Mrs. Selwyn were so seriously ill that the doctors were in great anxiety about both.] During this time he managed a Confirmation by his bedside, and before finally leaving was carried over to the chapel on his bed, which was laid on the altar steps, and from thence he gave his last address to his dear Melanesians. At last H.M.S. *Rapid* came, early in July, and took my husband and me and Dr. Welchman to Sydney. He John Selwyn. At the present moment the Melanesian Mission is seeking funds to supply the place of the *Southern Cross*, which is worn out and hardly fit for use.

had to be carried on his bed, which had four long handles attached, for three miles across the island to the landing-places, relays of eight Melaneseans bearing him. There his bed was placed in a whale-boat, and we rowed about two miles to the ship, and it was hoisted up by ropes and swung in-board. By this time he was getting better, and was able to enjoy seeing his friends in Sydney. Indeed, he actually addressed a missionary meeting gathered at our house from his bed.

“I must not forget to say how very kind every one was on board the *Rapid*, and how the Blue-jackets, attracted to him as all sailors were, begged to be allowed to carry him on board the mail-steamer, as they had carried him ashore. Dr. Welchman came home with us, nursing him with the utmost devotion.”

The boat that brought him home to England from Sydney was the *Ballarat*, the steward on board (who has since died) being warmly remembered still for all the attention and kindness he showed on the voyage.

He arrived in London in September 1891, and was met at Tilbury by his daughters, who found him so much better that he was able to sit up at dinner in the saloon for the first time.

The Bishop was taken in an ambulance to an hotel in Queen's Gate, from which he afterwards removed to De Vere Gardens. The surgeons, headed by Dr. Pickering Pick, had a great consultation over him and decided that the risk of amputation was too great, so that all they dared to do was to cut the sinews, which had so con-



tracted that his right leg was eight inches shorter than the left.

It was when at 18 De Vere Gardens that Sir James Paget was called in to advise, and told him plainly that he would never be able to climb a ship's side again and must resign his post.

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

*"18 DE VERE GARDENS, Nov. 11, 1891.*

"When you come you will find me in a very spic and span dressing-gown, and able to hop from my room to the drawing-room on crutches. . . . But my fate is sealed. We had Sir James Paget in to consult with Pick the other day, and he told me quite decidedly that I should never be able to do the work in Melanesia again, and not much of anything else. So a chapter in my life closes, to my wife's and my infinite sorrow. But it is so plainly my duty that it takes away the misery of having to decide."

He then took a house at Shottermill, near Haslemere, and gathered his family round him. His pleasure was in some measure spoilt by an attack of influenza in January 1892 which brought on a severe bout of the old pains. His sense of humour never deserted him through it all, and when he, who had been used to camp out by himself and be his own



cook and bed-maker, found himself in the hands of a solemn valet, whom he had engaged to see after him, his amusement and jokes knew no bounds. This careful attendant would come into the room at the exact moment, and gravely presenting a salver would say, "The pill, my Lord"—a proceeding altogether too much for the Bishop's gravity.

*To MRS. À COURT-REPINGTON.*

"SHOTTERMILL (*undated*).

"I am writing in bed with the old weight on [a heavy weight was attached to his leg to keep the sinews from contracting] after another five weeks of it. Influenza brought on inflammation of all the nerves of my bad leg, and it was a case of 'as you were.' . . . I could not stand or sit, and can only do the latter now, and that for a short time.

"I have set up a man nurse, who valets me in the most lordly way, whereat Annie laughs consumedly."

In April 1892 he took Langhurst, near Witley in Surrey, and when there used sometimes to manage on his crutches to take a service in the little school-church at Grayswood. In November of that year he went to London to have a further operation to try to lengthen his leg, and when there his mother had a very terrible illness, which kept them all in

London for most of the winter, and was a cause of great anxiety to the Bishop. It seemed as if his cup of suffering both physical and mental was just then full to overflowing, and there did not appear to be anything in prospect to cheer or interest his life beyond the family love which was ever one of his greatest joys.

## CHAPTER XV

### SELWYN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

It was no very bright prospect that lay before Bishop John Selwyn at this time. A hopeless cripple, cut off from the one sphere of labour to which he had given his life's devotion, there seemed little left him but to drag out a few more years of comparative uselessness.

But there was still a work for him to do. It was in the spring of 1893, when he was staying at Worthing with his second daughter, who was ill at the time, that the offer came to him of the Mastership of Selwyn College. Nothing more unexpected, nothing more startling, could have happened. At the first moment he even conceived the thing to be some kind of huge practical joke. He took the letter up into his daughter's room, threw it on her bed, and sat and roared with laughter at it "What do you think they want me to do now?" he said. The idea that he, "a rough man who had been out in the wilds and was not fit to associate

with dons and such folk," as he described himself, should be Head of a College appeared to him nothing short of preposterous.

The Bishop of Peterborough (now Bishop of London) was deputed by the Council of Selwyn College to convey their wishes. Here are his letters :

"THE PALACE, PETERBOROUGH, 17th March, 1893.

"MY DEAR BISHOP SELWYN,

"I have been requested, as one of a Committee appointed by the Council of Selwyn College, to ask you if you would be willing to succeed Mr. Lyttelton as Master. I may add that if *you* were willing to do so I think the Council would unanimously elect you.

"I may further say that this decision was not arrived at without a full consideration of all material facts. I am sorry to say that personally I am unknown to you ; but that was not the case with the majority of those present. I can only suppose that I was deputed to write to you that I might with greater frankness assure you that all the objections which would present themselves naturally to your mind—want of academic experience, and the rest—were and are before us. But we were of opinion that you possess qualities which, in the present condition of the College and of the University, would make your acceptance of the office of Master peculiarly useful to those great interests which we all wish to serve. I shall await with great expectancy your answer, though of course it is unreasonable to suppose that it can be given without due consideration and some days of reflection.

"I am,

"Yours very truly,

"M. PETERBURG."

“PETERBOROUGH, *March 20, '93.*

“MY DEAR BISHOP SELWYN,

“May I venture to say one or two things, as one who knows Cambridge and the duties of a Master of Selwyn College?

“(1) The important point in a Master is that he should be known outside Cambridge.

“(2) Equally important is it that in Cambridge he should distinctly represent some definite side of the work of the Church. You would represent elements of the greatest importance, which are not at present represented.

“(3) There is no difficulty in getting teachers for the University Examinations. The work of the Master need not be more than seeing that the requisite teaching is supplied, and in supplementing that by spiritual teaching of his own. You would find a loyal staff of teachers: but you would be able to give teaching of a general and valuable kind; it might be as informal as you like. You would find that it would be welcomed by many men outside Selwyn. There is absolutely no need that you should be responsible for any of the ordinary teaching.

“(4) Masters of Colleges may be of many kinds. What Lyttelton has done will not be the same as what *any* successor will do. The new Master will follow his own lines.

“The Council was of opinion that there was no one who could advance the interests of the College so much as yourself.

“Yours very truly,

“M. PETERBURG.”

His astonishment and amusement at the position in which he found himself may be gathered from the following extracts:

*To MRS. LONG INNES.*

“WORTHING, *April 3, 1893.*

“On Saturday I went up to London and saw the Council of Selwyn College, whom I fought to no purpose ; so now, as you will see in the papers, I am Master of that ilk. Don’t laugh, but, if you do, you can’t laugh as much as I do at the idea of my being a Don ! Every one told me it was my duty, so I am going ; but I don’t in the least like it.”

*To MRS. À COURT-REPINGTON.*

“WORTHING, *April 17, ’93.*

“What do you think of me as a Don ? I think it is the very funniest notion that I ever heard of, and I can’t conceive how it is to be done.”

*To R. DURNFORD, ESQ.*

“95 MARINE PARADE, WORTHING,

“*April 18, 1893.*

“MY DEAR DICK,

“My feeling when such an one as you writes to me anent Selwyn College is ‘*risum teneatis amici*’ (must quote now I’m a Don). Can you by any stretch of imagination fancy me in that position or can you fancy any sane body of men forcing me



to take it? I went to their meeting, and spoke to them with much plainness of speech. I appealed to my ignorance of the least rudiments of the classics, to my utter ignorance of the veriest outline of academic work. I quoted Stephie [his son, who had just matriculated at Trinity], whose opinion of my attainments was expressed with the utmost frankness . . . But it was no go, and so I am dragged to the Groves of Academe from the wilds of the Pacific. I laughed so consumedly at the thought when it was first mooted that my mother was quite angry. But it was all no good. Every soul I consulted said 'Go,' and so I go, the very squarest peg in the very roundest hole the world has ever seen. Cincinnatus (was it not C.?) is not in it in comparison. My wife trembles at the idea of —— and —— and the blues of Newnham looking over our garden wall [Newnham adjoins Selwyn College].

"Seriously, I go because I am told to go, and I tremble at the thought. I only hope I may get at the men, and turn them out as 'men.' I could do that when I could lead in Melanesia. How on earth I am to lead in my study I know not. However, people say it is all right, and, if I fail, I shall go with rapidity! . . .

"Best love to my godson.

"Yrs. affect.

"J. R. S., Bp."

Amongst the "plain things" that he spoke to those who pressed upon him the Mastership was the characteristic observation, "If you had called me to take command of a man-of-war I should have understood something about it,—but a College——!"

The unanimity with which his acceptance was insisted upon by all his friends counted for much, but chiefly he was influenced by his mother's strong wish that he should undertake the work. It may, perhaps, have been gathered in the course of this book that he was hardly likely to withstand the desire of a mother who had been so much to him throughout his life. All the same, just at first he often regretted the step he had taken. He had been offered, and had refused, a small living in Surrey, and used sometimes to say, "Why didn't you let me go to Busbridge?" Universal satisfaction was expressed when his decision became known. The College authorities were satisfied that his past achievements were credentials enough, and that the chance of having a Selwyn at the head of Selwyn College was not to be lost. It was thought by all a graceful act to offer the post to his father's son; and finally letters came from many quarters giving sound reasons for congratulation on the appointment. It may be sufficient to quote two—one from a lay, the other from a clerical, source.

*From* THE LATE RT. HON. GEORGE DENMAN.

“ 8 CRANLEY GARDENS, S.W., *April 3, 1893.*

“MY DEAR BISHOP,

“What glorious news! Selwyn of Selwyn! Hurrah!  
The Selwyn Boat will be head of the River!

“New Zealand will be glad.

“Melanesia will shout for joy.

“Trinity and Eton will be prouder than ever of their stock.  
But none will rejoice more heartily than does

“Yours most sincerely,

“G. DENMAN.”

*From* DR. TALBOT, Bishop of Rochester, at that time Vicar  
of Leeds.

“THE VICARAGE, LEEDS, *April 6, 1893.*

“MY DEAR BISHOP,

“May I send a word of cordial congratulation from  
an old friend at the appointment which I see in the papers?  
I cannot say what pleasure it gives me, for on the one hand it  
seems to secure to the College (D.V.) another lease of efficiency  
and prosperity, and all the advantage that comes from being  
efficiently represented in the University, and, on the other  
hand, I cannot help feeling a real delight that after all your  
troubles you should have the prospect of a new career which  
cannot fail to be to you full of rich interest and opportunity,  
and in which you may do such first-rate service for Church  
and State. I feel a pure pleasure in the news, and I should  
not like to go without just saying it and wishing you God-  
speed.

“Yours always sincerely,

“E. S. TALBOT.”

This last letter was specially valuable as coming from one who had been for many years head of Keble College, Oxford,\* and therefore knew better than most other people what was the nature of the work to which Bishop John Selwyn had been called.

In June 1893 he was formally installed as Master of Selwyn, and it is noteworthy that the foundation-stone of the College chapel was laid the previous day. This building was an immense interest to him, and to it, as will be seen later on, he gave lavishly of his time and money. There is a remarkable unanimity in the expression of the effect that he made on entering the University life of Cambridge. With one voice he is said by all to have been like a fresh sea-breeze blowing through the place. He himself fancied that at first he did not "hit it off" with the Dons, but this feeling quickly passed away, and it was not long before he said, "I think Cambridge people the kindest in the world." It can readily be understood by all who are acquainted with University life, even of the present day, that the influence of the coming of such a man would be to blow away, or at least disturb, much of the dust which settles down imperceptibly in such places. Nothing is sadder than to watch the slow but sure narrowing of a man who, with little interest outside his College

\* Keble at Oxford and Selwyn at Cambridge are Colleges upon strictly Church of England lines where a somewhat cheaper education is provided.

walls, spends year after year in the same routine of duties. And though their number is fewer, yet there are still in our Universities many who answer to this description. There are many more who, while spasmodically interested in matters concerning the outer world, consider the politics and life of their own University of paramount importance, and deem a man unable to pronounce the special academic Shibboleths a person of small account.

To these came Bishop John Selwyn with the smell of the salt Pacific still upon him : with the unconventionality of the island explorer visible in all his ways : with the conviction that there were in the wide world interests at least as great as those of Cambridge : with a body broken down by disease, but a heart as strong as ever, and a keenness which many another man of fifty might envy : and, lastly, with a resolve to use his remaining powers to their utmost extent in the service of those young men with whom he had so much in common.

His success was assured from the first. It may be that he made mistakes sometimes ; possibly his quick temper created difficulties now and again ; but, as Professor Stanton said in his memorial sermon, he was "a winning, noble-hearted man, for whose presence all ought to be the better." That was the secret of it ; he was so *noble*-hearted. No matter what the mistake, no matter how deeply irritated he had been, he was quick to make amends, never being

able to rest until he had expressed his own sorrow and sought the renewed friendship of others. There is a remarkable story illustrating this of an incident which happened during these last years of his life. He was passing through London, and drove in a four-wheeler from King's Cross to catch his train at Paddington. The cab crawled along, and time was getting short. The Bishop called to the driver to quicken up, and got an exceedingly rude reply. He lost his temper for a moment, and told the man he was not going to a funeral and *must* get along faster, whereat the cabby got more angry still. At Paddington the Bishop paid the man his exact fare but nothing more, telling him it was because of his incivility. Next day the whole story was told to Mrs. John Selwyn, the Bishop expressing his own unhappiness at having vexed the man by his careless words and then not having tried to help him afterwards. A week later he had to go to London again, so started by a very early train to try and find the man. On inquiry at King's Cross he learnt that the cabman's stand was at Paddington Station, so he hurried off there, and waited for an hour, watching all the cabs in and out, but in vain. At last he had to drive off to Waterloo to catch his train, and there, to his great joy, saw his man just entering the station. He had a long talk with him, telling him how sorry he was for what had occurred. The man followed suit, and it ended by the Bishop finding



out all about his home, and afterwards sending ten shillings to his children. This was a great comfort to the Bishop, for he had been worrying about it all the previous week.

The man who could take such pains to make up a dispute with a cabman was not likely to have prolonged troubles with the Cambridge folk, either Dons or undergraduates.

His main work lay, of course, with the latter, and it was not long before he worked a change in the general tone of Selwyn College. The discipline was not particularly good when he first took the reins of government. This was largely owing to a curious experiment which had been made by his predecessor, Mr. Lyttelton (now Bishop of Southampton), who had tried the plan of combining in his own person the offices of Master and Dean of the College. To most old University men it will be obvious that the result of such an experiment must be that the College would either have a Master or a Dean, but certainly not both, the two offices being singularly incompatible. Bishop Selwyn reverted to the old-fashioned plan, with excellent results. But it was also his personality which did so much to produce a better state of things. It is said that on the first Sunday after the College service the following words were overheard from one of the rowdiest of the men: "I say, I don't like the look of that chap's eye!" And no doubt that flashing eye which had controlled

Melanesian savages, and searched the hearts of sailors as he preached on the deck of a man-of-war, was of no little effect as he spoke to the undergraduates whom he had come to govern.

Perhaps his extreme unconventionality added slightly to his difficulties in this direction. It was not always understood by the men, who were not used to being shouted at from the window of the study of the Master's Lodge. But, if unconventional himself, he would stand no relaxation of discipline on the part of others. Probably the luckless undergraduate, who came one day to see him in his study wearing a pair of white boating shoes, still remembers the weighty words of the Master on that occasion! It is certain, however, that many Selwyn men recall with gratitude and affection those talks over a pipe late at night (also, perhaps, a little unconventional!) which ended so often in the pouring out of religious difficulties, after which the *Bishop* took the place of the *Master*, and the undergraduate knelt with him in prayer and received his episcopal blessing.

It was his tact, too, which helped him to keep up the discipline of the place. As in many another College, the question of letting off fireworks on the night of the fifth of November was a burning one. He showed his full appreciation of the fact that it is not *fireworks* that the undergraduate's soul desires, but *illegal* fireworks, and issued an invitation to the College to come and let them off in his own grounds!

Nothing could more gracefully and effectually have quenched the whole subject.

He was much interested and excited during the great contest in Cambridge about women's degrees, taking a strong line against their concession. He wrote several letters bearing upon this subject, from which the following extracts are interesting :

*To a COUSIN.*

"SELWYN COLLEGE LODGE, *Jan.* 9, 1897.

"I attribute to —— the deep reverence that I carry about with me, and which grows deeper as years go on, for womanhood in its purity and loveliness. I do hope the girls of the present day will not throw aside much of that charm in their thirst for learning, which brings them into contact with so much that may harden them, and so spoil them. It will be a bad day for *mankind* if they do."

*To MRS. A COURT-REPINGTON.*

"SELWYN COLLEGE, *May* 20, 1897.

"We are all agog about the women to-morrow. I hope the *non-placets* are going to win handsomely. The excitement is very great."

On the evening of the day of the voting (May 21)

there was some most unchivalrous conduct on the part of certain persons unknown outside Newnham College. A letter was written by some one who signed him- or her- self "Onlooker," which appeared in the *Spectator*, and which accused members of a "neighbouring College" of the outrage. Now, the College that is neighbour to Newnham is Selwyn, and great was the Master's wrath at the publication of this letter, especially when he had fully satisfied himself that the men of his College were none of them to blame. He never rested till he got to the bottom of the affair and had obliged "Onlooker" to write a further letter to the *Spectator* admitting the inaccuracy of many of the statements, and unreservedly withdrawing the accusation against the "neighbouring College."

Of course his share in University business was not very large, and his attainments did not fit him for lecturing, but from the first he always gave one lecture each week on Divinity to Selwyn men in their first two years. Uncommonly racy and interesting these addresses were, being largely taken up by narratives of his own experiences. "I don't know what I taught them," he said of his first lecture, "but I know I made them laugh!"

By far the most important work of this kind which he did was in 1896, when he delivered the course of pastoral lectures for that year at the request of the University Theological Board. Any

one wishing to know further what manner of man he was, and what manner of work he did, cannot do better than read these lectures, which are published as a separate volume by the S.P.C.K.

His devotion to his old life and work was still intense, and his continual reference to them in his lectures and conversation was so frequent, that "My islanders" became a standing joke in the College. Naturally enough, one of the matters which troubled him most was the question of his successor in Melanesia. At last he had the great happiness of knowing that the work would be carried on in the true spirit. His close friend Canon Jacob (now Bishop of Newcastle) was consulted by him, and recommended an old curate, the Rev. Cecil Wilson, to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Benson), Dr. Codrington, and the Master of Selwyn College, who had been commissioned to make the appointment. For Mr. Wilson's acceptance he was most thankful, though his regret at his own resignation crops up through all his letters on the subject.

*To MRS A COURT-REPIGTON.*

*"LICHFIELD, Jan. 8, '94.*

"I *must* stay with Cecil Wilson, Vicar of Moordown, whom I have stolen to be Bishop of Melanesia! Alas! I don't like to think of any one else bearing that name, but that is

only a passing pang. . . . and he is *such* a nice fellow."

*To the Same.*

"SELWYN COLLEGE LODGE, *Feb. 20, '94.*

"I have just been with Annie and Pearlie to hear Bishop Tucker [of Mombasa]. He came to call this morning and we had much talk. Oh! my heart burned to be out again. The shelf is not very comfortable."

*To the Same.*

"SELWYN COLLEGE LODGE, *Dec. 6, '94.*

"I heard that Wilson was just starting for the Islands, and is probably coming back about this time. Then he goes to New Zealand, and finally for a short tour in Australia to settle many things. I cannot help seeing the wisdom of God in taking me away when He did, as I had so broken down that I should never have been fit for all these things."

The building of the College chapel was an immense interest to him. There were no funds for properly furnishing it, and to raise these he devoted much time and labour, starting the subscription list with a gift from himself of £500. The handsome and dignified carving of the stalls was an especial



object to him, and the completion of this part of the work is the fitting memorial of his Mastership. No one who has seen the chapel can fail to appreciate the loving care with which every detail of a most beautiful building has been carried out. In the summer of 1895 the edifice had been nearly completed, and by a fortunate chance it fell to Bishop John Selwyn's lot to preach in it for the first time. As will be seen by the subjoined letter, there had been no intention of using the chapel at all on the occasion, and, when it was determined to use it, Canon Gore of Westminster was to have been the preacher, so that it was by a kind of double accident that the Bishop's voice was the first one heard in Selwyn College Chapel. The incident of the dove, so curiously symbolical and beautiful, was a great delight to the Bishop.

*To MRS. A COURT-REPIGTON.*

*"SELWYN COLLEGE LODGE, July 28, 1895.*

"Canon Gore is holding a retreat here, and yesterday he broke down for a bit with the heat. So I took the bull by the horns and rigged up the new chapel, so that he could give most of his addresses in it. He could not take the first, so I took it—the first words ever uttered in its walls—and, as a good omen, in came a dove to listen to the 'Veni Creator.'"

It is not surprising to find that besides the religious life of the College and the discipline and supervision of the work of the undergraduates, Selwyn Boat Club received a considerable impetus from the coming of a Master who had himself been a noted oar. All sorts of stories might be told of his endeavours in this direction. "If you can't row, I'll make you," was no uncommon thing to hear him say to the hesitating freshman. He was down on the towing-path in his hand-tricycle whenever he was well enough and could spare the time, and would shout out orders to the Selwyn crew as he kept pace with them in their practice. On one occasion he was actually helped into the stern of a new Selwyn four, and coxed it on its trial spin. In all such ways he renewed the spirit of his youth, and gained besides a more intimate knowledge of the men of his College. The cups which he had won in University races thirty years before he presented to Selwyn College, where they will ever be cherished in memory of one who was almost as keen for her success on the river as in the schools.

His generosity towards the chapel has been noticed, but this was but a small part of his lavish expenditure on the College generally. At the risk of repetition, this leading feature of his character must again be insisted upon. He gave lavishly, ungrudgingly, of his best. He spent largely on the staff of College tutors, while his gifts to under-

graduates were so frequent as to be sometimes thought a little indiscriminate. To the College servants he was kindness itself. He took a personal interest in each one of them, would call them to him for a friendly word or two as they passed, and did all he could to help their club and make their lives happy. His relations with them may be summed up in the words of one of them, who, on being asked about the late Master twelve months after his death, said, "I only know I lost the best friend ever man had."

But his career at Cambridge was not memorable in connection with Selwyn College alone. He threw himself heartily into several kinds of outside work. He preached and spoke for Melanesia, and took a share besides in many matters ecclesiastical. Thus in Advent 1894, he addressed the candidates for ordination at Lichfield. "It is a day," said the Bishop of the diocese (Dr. Legge), "that they will never forget. The reality of the man, the strong simplicity of his homethrusts, the enthusiasm for all that is good and true, and the evident witness of his own body that he bore in it the marks of the Lord Jesus, touched, convinced, inspired us all."

Professor Stanton in his memorial sermon speaks of another work to which the Bishop gave much attention. This was the Barnwell and Chesterton Clergy Fund, the object of which was to aid the poorer parishes in Cambridge. He became president

of this association, and under his care it gained a renewed vitality.

His old love of hospital work and desire to help and cheer the sick and maimed, especially any who were cripples like himself, was most noticeable during his last years. He visited the infirmary in Cambridge regularly, and often took services there. Not content with that, he undertook a certain amount of pastoral work, obtaining the permission of the late Vicar of St. Giles' to visit sick people in that parish, and welcome was the sound of the Bishop's crutches as he dragged himself up a cottage staircase to bring a bit of sunshine to some poor bedridden sufferer.

He never seemed able to pass a fellow cripple by, and many amusing stories are told of his persuading lame men to race him, and his delight when his crutches proved faster than those of his opponent.

In the general religious life of Cambridge he took a large part, but, as might be expected, more especially in all that concerned Missions. The Cambridge branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was greatly stimulated by him, while at the same time he took a leading part in the Board of Missions for the Province of Canterbury. The Bishop of Newcastle (Dr. Jacob) gives some account of this latter work. He says:

“Bishop John Selwyn and I were almost contemporaries . . . but we never came to know one another personally until 1888, the year of the Lambeth Conference, when I was secretary to the Board of Missions for the Province of Canterbury. But our intimacy and friendship were of still later date, and extended over the last few years of his life, when he had come back a cripple. We became friends almost instinctively, and the friendship became closer and closer. . . . Our common interest in Missions was a great link between us, and Bishop Selwyn’s interest in what the Board of Missions had undertaken was so great that at last, seeing how burdened I was with the labours of the report and all my other work, he most kindly offered to tabulate all the replies which we had received from India to definite questions which we had sent out. He not only did this, but wrote nearly sixteen pages of the report, all bearing on discipline and order, without which I could never have got the report done. . . . On my becoming Bishop of Newcastle in January 1896, he succeeded me as Secretary to the Board of Missions. He had thrown himself so vigorously into the work, and had so well helped on the Missionary Conference of the Anglican Communion in 1894, and had so happy a power of inspiring others, that he was the obvious man for the post if he were willing to accept it, and it was a great joy to me when I heard of his appointment. I cannot say how much I loved this delightful man. I stayed with him at Cambridge after he had accepted the Mastership of Selwyn College, and he honoured me by taking part in my consecration. We found ourselves in close accord on nearly all the subjects we discussed together. His pluck when suffering from terrible pain was something to see. His absolute unselfishness ; his power of throwing himself into all the interests of another ; his power of inspiring young men and bringing out all that was manly and good in them ; his hatred of ‘red-tape’ or of any kind of sham ; his intense longing for the evangelisation of the world ; his love for



Melanesia and the Mission to which he had given his life—all this is now a memory of the past, but a memory that inspires. When I heard of his death I thanked God that I had known and loved him well, and I felt the singular completeness of that heroic life.”

Mission work in the poorer parts of London had a great attraction for him, and he was, of course, specially interested in the Eton Mission at Hackney Wick. A characteristic story is told of one of his visits there by one who was present. It runs thus :

“The Eton Mission Church was filled one weekday evening with a large congregation of those poorer members of society who lived (as they themselves describe it) ‘under the arch’ through which you had to pass into the Mission district. No one, they said, lived ‘under the arch’ who could afford either financially or morally to live elsewhere. But they had many of them come to church (an old iron church) that night because their Missioner (the present Bishop of Zululand) had invited them to hear the message of the Bishop of Melanesia, an old Etonian, whose teaching would certainly help them. The processional hymn was heard, and the procession itself proceeded on its way round the church, the last figure in it being the Bishop. Suddenly he was missed, and the procession itself proceeded on its way unconscious of its loss. What had happened? Why, just this: John Selwyn had discovered an old woman who could not find her place in her hymn-book, and all his episcopacy was set on meeting the need, however humble, of that one poor old soul. He was a Bishop indeed, but he was a man first.”

Not content with visiting the poor in London, he had many of them to visit him at Cambridge.



Every Whit Monday about one hundred men from one or other of the clubs managed by the Oxford House in Bethnal Green used to come down to Selwyn College for the day. There was always dinner in hall for them, at which the Bishop presided. After one of these Whit Mondays, Mr. Ingram (now Bishop of Stepney) wrote to Miss Selwyn and said, "Please thank your father very much indeed. The men all fell in love with him."

But it was in the starting of the Cambridge House that Bishop John Selwyn interested himself most keenly of all. The following account, extracted from a letter written by the Rev. J. O. F. Murray, of Emmanuel College, makes clear the Bishop's part in the initiation of the scheme.

"EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, *June 5, 1899.*

"The outline of events is simple enough. On February 17, 1896, the Bishop of Rochester addressed a large meeting of members of the University, senior and junior, in the hall of S. John's College. In the course of his address the Bishop made an earnest appeal to the University as a whole to support and supplement the work of the various College Missions in South London by providing 'a Cambridge something' to emulate, on such lines as might commend themselves to Cambridge feeling, the work done for the East End by the Oxford House.

"The way had been prepared for this appeal by a course of lectures given in the preceding May Term by the present Bishop of Stepney, then head of Oxford House, on 'Pastoral Work in Large Towns.' These lectures had done a great deal

to bring the work of the Oxford House before the minds of the younger members of the University ; and at the close of his last lecture the lecturer had expressly challenged his hearers to found a similar institution in the name of Cambridge in South London. But neither he nor they were in a position to make the challenge effective, and nothing came of it.

“It was, I believe, entirely due, under God, to Bishop Selwyn that the Bishop of Rochester’s appeal did not share the same fate.

“Bishop Selwyn had been speaking the night before at the annual meeting of the Trinity Mission, making, as the *Cambridge Review* says, ‘the speech of the evening.’ His mind was clearly full of the vast need of South London. He had also, no doubt from his own experience, a keener sympathy than the rest of us with the burden laid on a Bishop who was called to wrestle with so terrible a problem : not only his chivalry, but his reverence for the office of the speaker made him feel that this appeal had at least *primâ facie* grounds for being taken as a direct call from God. He therefore set to work at once to organise a response to it.

“His first step was to arrange for a discussion of the appeal by the members of a Graduate Church Society, of which he was president. This meeting was attended by some of the College Missioners from South London ; and the relative advantages of proceeding by an immediate effort to procure the foundation of fresh College Missions, and of trying to found an institution which should bear the name of the University, were debated with great vigour. In the end a Committee was appointed to see whether any working scheme for a ‘Cambridge House’ could be devised. Of this Committee Bishop Selwyn was chairman.

“The following paragraphs written by the Bishop, and printed in the *Cambridge Review* on October 29, give a convenient summary of the work of the Committee. After

describing the events which led to the appointment of the Committee, he proceeds :

““The Committee at once found themselves confronted by two facts: (1) That it was impossible to call anything a *Cambridge* “something” which did not include Trinity; and (2) that Trinity had already done, as a College, what the Bishop desired the University to do as a whole, by establishing not only a Mission but a Settlement in South London.

““The field of inquiry seemed, therefore, to be narrowed to the one question: Would and could the Trinity Settlement expand itself into the larger and more comprehensive “something” which the Bishop pleads for?

““A meeting was therefore held in London with the representatives of the Trinity Settlement, and a very frank discussion and interchange of views took place. The representatives of Trinity Court explained that they had found it practically impossible to secure the continuous services of a layman as head of the Court, and they had therefore appointed the Rev. W. Falkner Baily, on the following conditions, which they had agreed upon at the instance of the Bishop of Durham.

““The Committee in inviting a Clergyman to take the Headship of Trinity Court express their hope that he will find, while holding the office, ample scope for the fulfilment of his clerical duties.

““In regard to the religious side of his work, they hope that he will gather round him a body of men prepared to work on a religious basis, while not excluding those who cannot take the full position of Churchmen.

““They look to him to direct the devotional life of the Court, and to give advice and assistance to its members in any religious work they may undertake, or in reading for Holy Orders. . . .’

“This is the basis on which Trinity Court is now working ; and it explains the resolutions in which the Settlement Committee most generously offer that Trinity Court should become a Cambridge House. These are :

“(1) The Settlement Committee are for their part willing that Trinity Court should become a Cambridge House, provided they can be assured that there is a real and substantial demand for a Cambridge House.

“(2) They are unwilling to recommend the alterations of the present constitution, which has been found to work successfully, without a guarantee that the work shall be continued on a similar basis.

“The lines therefore of the Cambridge House would be somewhat as follows :

“(1) There would be a clerical head, directing and supervising the whole work of the house. He would hold such services as he might think best for the welfare of those who might choose to come to them. These services would form part of the regular routine of the house, but on the distinct understanding that attendance at them should not be compulsory.

“(2) To this house Cambridge men who accept this basis would come. Whether as laymen or as intending hereafter to take Holy Orders, they would all find work in which they could take part. Members of colleges having missions would naturally assist their own missions. Candidates for Holy Orders would receive from the clerical head such assistance and guidance as they might need.

“Such is the generous offer made by the Committee of the Trinity Settlement to the University. Their first condition

has now to be fulfilled—viz., ‘that they should be assured that there is a real and substantial demand for a Cambridge House on the part of the University.’ In order to ascertain this, the distinguished Cambridge men who are named as speaking at the meeting on November 10 are coming to support the Bishop of Rochester in his appeal. It is no small proof of his belief in the efficacy of such a house to aid him in his arduous work that he should have been at the pains to rally to his side such men. Their presence and their words will tell us that they at least think that the thing can and ought to be done. It is for the University to decide whether it shall be done.

“On November 10 the Guildhall was filled from end to end. The Bishop of Rochester was supported by the Bishop of Durham, the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, and the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, President of Trinity Court. The necessary resolutions were carried with enthusiasm, and Bishop Selwyn was appointed Chairman of the Committee nominated to carry them into effect. He remained Chairman of the Cambridge Committee of the ‘Cambridge House’ after its constitution was finally settled, but for the last six months of his life he was unfortunately unable to attend our meetings.

“Such in outline was the history of the founding of the ‘Cambridge House.’ You will see from it, meagre as it is, something of the extent of our debt to Bishop Selwyn. His ear was the first to hear the call to the work. His energy overcame the *vis inertiae* which is so very strong among us, and which might have checked a less resolute spirit than his. His tact and his statesmanship carried us safely through the initial difficulties, not so much by any special subtlety of resource as by the power of his personality. We all, whatever our own preferences might be, felt that we could trust him, and so he was able to conciliate conflicting interests and bind us into a real unity. I trust that the institution which is in



so real a sense his creation may have a long career of usefulness before it, and that his relation to it may be one of its most treasured and most stimulating memories.

“Yours sincerely,

“J. O. F. MURRAY.”

In the spring of 1897 Bishop John Selwyn visited the Mission, giving some lantern lectures, mixing freely with the working men and enjoying their talk. He managed to clamber, crutches and all, up the movable ladder into the Mission chapel, and his memory will live long amongst those to whom he spoke his strong, bright, heartening words. The delightful way he had with working women as well as working men is instanced by a visit he paid to a mothers' meeting which was held in an out-of-the-way *upstairs* Mission-room in Fulham Fields. In the middle of the meeting his cheery voice was heard at the foot of the stairs telling a street urchin to carry up one of his crutches, while he laboriously toiled up with the help of the other and the boy's shoulder. He arrived in the room breathless but beaming, and sitting himself down began his talk to them with some little joke about cutting out clothes, telling them how his father cut out jackets and skirts on the deck of his mission ship to clothe the first Melanesian girls he brought away to teach. He then talked most enthusiastically about his Mission life, and brightened the careworn faces of the women by his inspiring words and stories. He



was terribly tired at the time, but would not disappoint those who were expecting him—an old rule of life which he had laid on himself years before in Melanesia.

A favourite missionary project of his was “The Foreign Service Order,” a scheme by which junior clergy could be enrolled as willing to work in distant lands if called upon to do so, with the consent of their Bishop. He read a capital paper on the subject at the Shrewsbury Church Congress of 1896, and in the following June the United Boards of Missions of the Provinces of Canterbury and York received a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, forwarding a copy of resolutions respecting a scheme for foreign service, which had been agreed upon by the Bishops at their last episcopal meeting. By this time the Order has been formed, and a clerical secretary been appointed in the person of the Vicar of Windsor; so that one matter which was very near Bishop Selwyn’s heart in the last years of his life is already being satisfactorily carried out.

Among the many other good works, outside the University routine, in which the Bishop interested himself were the Girls’ Letter League (an association for the promotion of letter writing between ladies and factory girls), of which he was president, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to the Cambridge Committee of

which he belonged, and in the work of which his great love for children caused him to be deeply interested.

Of his home life at this time it is more difficult to speak, for, though he never let it be felt more than he could possibly help, the shadow of his pain and weakness must have been always present. Never had he before had so long a spell of uninterrupted domestic happiness, and this he enjoyed to the full. His tastes were so childlike and simple that the little incidents of his home were a great delight to him. He was never better pleased than when planning little surprises for others, and he preferred quiet enjoyments to great entertainments. This simplicity was obvious, too, in his relation towards God. He deprecated much introspection, and would often say, "If we try to know God's will and to do it, He will supply the rest. We needn't fash ourselves about our *feelings*." And again, "Look outwards and upwards, not inwards, and realise God as the loving Father of us His children."

He never allowed adverse criticism of others in his home, and, if any talk of this kind began, he used to say, "Can't we find something else to talk about?" One who has read through a large part of the correspondence of his life is able to bear this unique witness, that in all his letters not one word has been found that might not be published for fear of hurting other people's feelings.

His consideration for the servants of his household was unbounded, as was their devotion to him. He insisted that each one should have an armchair in her bedroom, as well as several in their common sitting-room, saying that they were the people who earned it best.

He was naturally impatient in disposition, but through his long sufferings all who came near him were struck by his marvellous endurance. He made so light of his illness and pain that both the members of his family and his doctors were often deceived by it. He was always intensely grateful for anything that was done for him, and never forgot to thank his nurses for the least service. He never murmured. "I never heard him mention his privations," says his mother. He always found something to be thankful for or to make a joke about. Even at that terrible moment in Norfolk Island, when the doctors were taking pieces of diseased bone out of his leg, he was making riddles and epigrams upon them! Mrs. John Selwyn adds the following testimony:

"Not even to me did he ever own, except three or four times during his seven years of lameness, how bitter a trial it was to him, and then it was only to say, 'I do trust I am making it a *willing* offering. I *try* to make it so.' Once I remember that he and I were standing in our garden at Cambridge when Mr. Still and some other old College friends, who had been talking with us, ran down the slope and across the lawn to go to some boat-race. He was standing on his

crutches, and his eyes filled with tears as he said, 'Ah ! what wouldn't I give to be able to do that ! It is *so* hard to be such a log, and walking on crutches is so irksome. But I mustn't grumble. I want my lameness to be a *willing* offering to God, and I don't think I really grudge it. Let us talk of something else.' He often used to say, 'If any one had told me in old days that I should be a cripple and an invalid, I should have said it was the one thing I *couldn't* bear ; and yet, by God's grace, it seems quite different now. But it is only because He has helped me so.'

The society of his little children was a great solace to him, and he delighted in playing games with them, showing them tricks with string, &c., and in many little ways letting them have their full share in lightening his load. It was characteristic of him that he got amusement even out of his crutches, and was especially pleased when he could use them for any out-of-the-way purpose. For instance, he was seen using them to pull a footstool out of the way of the choir in church, and delighted to lend them for such things as pushing up a sash window, or indeed for any purpose apart from their proper use.

His pain and weakness never prevented the exercise of his humour, and many things were penned by him in most happy vein while Master of Selwyn. For instance, when his old friend Mr. Waters wrote to ask him for a subscription towards building a Mission chapel at Hope, he replied as follows :

“SELWYN COLL. LODGE, Dec. 18, 1894.

“MY DEAR WATERS,

“Do hawks pick out other hawks’ een? Am I not building a chapel of my own which we have waited for for fourteen years, and which I am risking Holloway to finish? Am I not doing all I can for Melanesia? Where, then, does Hope come in? I live on hope. I tick on hope. I order screens, benches, altars, electric lights on hope. And now another Hope springs up. How can I stand another Hope? It is not hope, it is madness, it is despair! Nay, it is a flood of *waters* which hurries me into a gulf of bankruptcy. Dun me not now: avaunt! aroint thee! You ask for a Mission chapel, forsooth. *You* combine them in one; *I* have a Mission *and* a chapel. What are thy wants to mine? You have no senior tutor who haunts your room by day and by night, and tells you you are cold, you are fearful, you are neglecting your duties. You have no enthusiastic Bishop who proposes to attack the whole of Queensland, to buy farms for £2000, to work them at a dead loss.

“Cruel fate! to be thus wounded by one I thought my friend! Hope for £5, but not yet is £5 for Hope. If hope is not a sorry jade, then Hope shall have £5, I hope.

“Yrs. aff.,

“J. R. SELWYN, *Bp.*”



He was exceedingly fond of writing epigrams and short scraps of verse. Just about this same time his friend Mr. Richard Durnford sent him some Latin lines written by the Rev. James Lonsdale, when (many years ago) he was asked by Bishop Chapman, then a Fellow of Eton, to preach to the school in the chapel on some Sunday during the Bishop's residence. The lines were these :

“ Cur imparem me cingis honoribus,  
Me triste lignum, me vetulum pigro  
Sermone, fundentemque tardo  
Ore soporiferum papaver ? ”

Bishop John Selwyn sent back the following translation :

“ Why do you crown with bays I cannot wear  
Me, a ‘ sad stick,’ archaic, dry, and drear ?  
Who even when my lips can find a sound  
Pour nought but dullest soporifics round !

At the beginning of the October Half in 1894 the Eton boys were prevented from going back to school by the state of the drains in College, and a short time afterwards were sent home again because of the floods. Hence came “ a guardian's growl ” from the Bishop's pen.

“ At first the drains took time away,  
And now the floods come into play !  
We wish that Eton would take pains  
To drain its floods, or flood its drains ! ”



In October 1896 his leg was worse again. He had had a great treat in the enjoyment of a holiday spent mainly on board ship, but the result was not good.

*To MRS. A COURT-REPPINGTON.*

*"SELWYN COLL., Oct. 18, 1896.*

"The girls, Stephie, and I went to Norway this summer and did the Fjords. I left them at Trondhjem and went with the training squadron to Shetland, and so home. It was very jolly, but I am not sure that I did not catch a chill in Shetland, where the weather was horrible—and hence my leg."

This seems the only account of any special recurrence of pain until the following year, when his last illness began.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE END

DURING the whole of Michaelmas Term 1897 Bishop John Selwyn was exceedingly ill. To add to his other sufferings gastric trouble set in, and he was unable to take any part in the busy College life around him. He went up to London to preach in St. Paul's Cathedral on October 3, but he was not really fit for the exertion. October 20 was Selwyn College Commemoration Day, and the Bishop of Lichfield (Dr. Legge) preached the sermon. He said afterwards :

“It was at Cambridge that I last saw him [Bishop J. Selwyn], laid low by that attack from which he never wholly recovered. He had asked me to preach on their Commemoration Day in the beautiful chapel which he had been instrumental in building, a request which I could not disregard, a privilege which I could not fail to prize. It was a great disappointment to him to be unable to attend any of the services on that occasion, but in the brief interviews I had with him, amid the evident signs of pain and discomfort which clouded a little the usual brightness of his smile, there was

the same eye of fire, there were the same strong features telling of a high and noble purpose sustained by unwavering faith in God."

From this time until the middle of November he gradually became worse, and the gravest fears were entertained. Then, however, his old rallying powers seemed to come to the rescue, and for a time he was a little better. There is still preserved a touching little pencil note which he wrote on November 20 to his aunt, Mrs. Thompson.

"MY DEAREST AUNTIE,

"I am trying to write a line or two to amuse myself and, I hope, to gratify my friends. God has been very good to me, and I am a little better, but the gastric trouble has been awful, and I am still very shaky. I have lived on milk for three weeks. People here are so kind.

"Your loving,

"J. R. S., *Bp.*"

Dr. Bradbury, Downing Professor of Medicine, was unremitting in his care of the Bishop, and Professor Clifford Allbutt was also called in in consultation. Towards the end of the year great hopes were expressed that a change of climate to some warm dry place might complete his recovery. He himself was anxious to try Sorrento, but the journey was pronounced to be too long, and finally it was

arranged that he should be taken to Pau. He waited until after the first Sunday in the ensuing term, and on January 23, 1898, he attended Morning Prayer in the College chapel for the first time since the previous summer, and for the last time in his life. He read the absolution and gave the blessing—his last blessing—to the members of the College, none of whom could look at him, and notice the ravages wrought by his long illness, without a keen pang and a heaviness of heart as they feared lest they might see his face no more.

On January 25 he left Cambridge accompanied by Mrs. J. R. Selwyn and his eldest daughter, the little party arriving at Pau on February 2.

Just one week afterwards he had an exceedingly bad night, much disturbed by the gastric trouble, and a nurse was then obtained to undertake the night work. On the following day, February 10, and again on the 11th, he seemed to be a little stronger, but was tired out from want of sleep. On this latter day he read a little, but *very* little, and towards evening became slightly breathless. About one o'clock on the following morning (Saturday, February 12) there was some small stir in the house, and the voices of doctor and nurse were heard in consultation. Then the former came out of the Bishop's room and told Mrs. Selwyn that the end might come at any time, but that it was hardly likely to be that night.

The doctor hurried away to fetch some oxygen to ease the breathing, and meantime Mrs. and Miss Selwyn remained in his room, finding a wonderful strength and help in being with him. He wondered why they should stay with him at that time of night, and begged them to go to bed, but they told him they wanted to see him easier before they left. The oxygen which the doctor brought relieved him considerably, and the watchers were able to go and get some rest. All that last day he was very weary and tired. He could only lie on his left side, for lying on his back increased the breathlessness, and his other side was painful from perpetual resting upon it.

Just before four o'clock in the afternoon Mrs. and Miss Selwyn, who were with him, thought him worse and called the nurse, who at once saw that the end was near. Miss Selwyn read the Commendatory Prayer and some other prayers, after which the Bishop thanked them and said, "Please be quiet now." Presently he said, "I think I am dying," and then for nearly three hours his mind seemed wholly given to prayer, his eyes looking upwards as they always did when he prayed as he lay in bed. He again and again said, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore"; and even when his speech became indistinct those who watched him could catch the

words "love of God" and "with us *all*," with such emphasis on the "*all*." Now and then scraps of Collects and Psalms fell from his lips, and then he would say, "Oh! I'm so tired!" and "I'm done, I'm done." Once his mind went back to old days on board the *Southern Cross*, and he said, "Call me at one bell." Up to the very end he looked first at one of those whom he loved so dearly and then at the other with a long earnest gaze which assured them that he was conscious and knew them to the last.

The sun, which had been streaming into the room all the afternoon, had set, and it was growing dark, when he turned a little more upon his side, the rough breathing ceased, a few long gentle breaths came, and he "fell asleep" as softly and gently as a little child. God had called him just at "one bell," as he wished.

He was robed for burial in full episcopal attire, with a little much-prized gold chain and cross round his neck, and crosses of violets on his breast and feet. Early in the morning of February 14 he was taken to St. Andrew's Church, and there his dear ones found him lying before the altar when they went to the celebration at 8.30. The funeral was that same afternoon, and was taken by Mr. Torry—Mr. Acland-Troyte, the chaplain at Pau, being unwell. The Bishop's favourite hymn, "Hark! the sound of many voices," was sung by the little choir to the tune



which was used at Selwyn College. Many English visitors followed the coffin all the way to the cemetery, and the evident sympathy and reverence of the crowds of wayfarers, who were attending a market in the place, helped to take away the inevitable sadness of laying a much-loved body to rest in a strange land. One little incident was especially touching. As the procession skirted the barrack square the soldiers, who were drilling, stood at attention and saluted, and the sentry presented arms till *he* had passed. It was so exactly what he, with his love for soldiers and sailors, would have wished.

As may easily be supposed, the news of Bishop John Selwyn's death caused a very widespread sorrow. Letters to members of the family poured in, expressive of affection and admiration for him. The steward of Selwyn College (Mr. Dempster) wrote in the names of himself and the servants at the College, saying that their late Master had been dearly loved by all of them, and that they felt they had lost a friend who could never be replaced. The following extracts from letters will give some idea of the feeling that was aroused :

“To-day Canon Gore, in his University sermon, spoke of him as the ‘hero-spirit’ in terms which must have touched the hearts of all that great congregation. It seems to me that any one to whom he ever spoke must have loved him. Now the great son is with the great father—the two who both fought so gallantly against the kingdom of darkness in

the remotest corners of earth and sea ! . . . The last time I saw him I sat beside him in Marlborough College Chapel. The lesson that evening was 2 Corinthians iv., and as the 10th and following verses \* sounded in my ears I glanced at the crutches that lay at his feet, and felt that every word might have been spoken by him."

A well-known Cambridge resident also bore witness as follows :

"It is a great thing for us in Cambridge to have had among us, even for a few years only, that noble cheering presence, which told one that it was possible to 'rejoice in the Lord always.'"

A Cambridge friend wrote :

"Many old residents might envy the way in which the Bishop has endeared himself here in these few years. Certainly he is one whose life has been measured by love, and we would not be of the world which reckons by years."

A domestic servant, who had been at Selwyn College Lodge, and whose great sorrow was that she could not serve him to the very end, wrote :

"I feel too heart-broken to write any more. The whole College with us are mourning a beloved Master's loss."

How great was the grief which was felt by his islanders in Melanesia can be imagined. Probably

\* "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," &c.

no one with whom they had ever had to do had obtained such a hold on their affections, and their simple hearts must have been wrung when the news of his death was passed from island to island.

The Rev. Clement Marau sent the following letter to Mrs. J. R. Selwyn, and from it can be gathered the depth of feeling stirred in those distant seas.

*Translation of the REV. CLEMENT MARAU'S Letter to  
MRS. SELWYN.*

“MY BELOVED MOTHER,

“What shall I write? Can it be that I should pleasantly give you news? No! but let me converse with you in grief, because I was surprised when I heard by a letter in which the Rev. J. Archdeacon Palmer told me that ‘our father indeed, Bishop Selwyn, was dead.’ It was like the darkness of night to me, as if I was not yet willing to hear the news of death, of him, or of you, or of Dr. Codrington. Ah! it pains me to hear that one who loved us so much has died so; our minds are confused because our father is dead. I look now in vain for love. All of us here, his children at Ulawa, are thoroughly grieved for him in sympathy with you. If it were all dry land for you and us we could meet together to weep and to grieve together. I have not yet seen in any one now a love greater than that with which you and your husband have loved us black people. Bishop Selwyn wholly gave and laid down his life for us, and he worked very hard for our benefit, and illness came upon him because of that, and he was long in suffering, and died because of that. I have always seen the evidence of his love and yours in this ship of ours. I know how much money you two gave for it in love for us. It was as if he gave his life for us; and everything of all sorts he gave for us. It was not only money and a ship,

not only all sorts of things, but it was the true example he set for us, all his good life for us. And therefore I suppose it was as if God saw his love more than man sees, and took him away from us; and God has given him a heavenly life, greater than the life that he has given up to us his children in Christ. I cannot speak to you with words of comfort. It is for you to comfort us the children of both of you in the Lord. When we are in grief and calamity, or in any doubt it is for you to help us with good words that can comfort us. Still we wish all of us to sympathise with you in grief for our true father, whom the Father of all has taken from us; and we wish that you should see the proof that we still think of your husband and you, and of that love that came forth from him to us, because he thoroughly loved every one; and I think also that it came forth above all to me. The gift of you two still remains whole with me, and the words that came with them I shall always take great care of. And the last gift I suppose was sent near his death: he heard with compassion that I was building this church here at Ulawa, and he sent me several pounds, more than any one could easily give. I shall never be able to forget Bishop Selwyn and Bishop Patteson, who both indeed gave their lives for me, until my day comes when they lay me in the grave. I know by eye-witness that they two were true men of God, who will change their lives for a life of glory. We shall be sorry that his body is removed from us, and that our eyes cannot reach to see him, the hand cannot reach to touch him; but his life has reached and taken hold of the life of Christ. I shall add my grief to yours, my mother, for my father; and I shall also praise God for the high place that he has received in the place of eternal life. I wish to know on what day of the month he died, that always on his day I and my people may pray and thank God for him. If you please write and tell me; and, if it can be, I wish for a little prayer appropriate for him which you will write and give me, to help the little prayer which I have thought of myself. I have called

one boy by the name of Selwyn for a remembrance of him.  
Good-bye, my mother,

“I am,

“CLEMENT MARAU.”

On May 14 a meeting was held in the Combination-room at Trinity College, Cambridge, to promote a memorial to the late Bishop. The Vice-Chancellor presided over an influential gathering, which decided that the memorial should be twofold—viz., in Cambridge and in Melanesia. The really remarkable outcome of the meeting was the fact that the committee which was appointed to carry out the various schemes was of an unusually influential character, consisting as it did of the Bishops of London, Lichfield, Ely, Melanesia, with Bishop Abraham, Lord Ashcombe, Lord Windsor, Sir John Gorst, M.P., most of the Heads of Houses, and numerous other well-known persons.

The fact is that his heroism attracted all who ever heard his name, and his loveliness all who ever saw his face.

No more admirable epitome of the man can be found than Provost Hornby's inscription on the memorial brass placed to his memory in Eton College Chapel.

JOHANNES RICHARDSON SELWYN

GEORGII AUGUSTI

NOVÆ ZELANDIÆ EPISCOPI PRIMI

FILIUS NATU MINOR

OLIM EPISCOPUS MELANESÆNSIS

## BISHOP JOHN SELWYN

DEINDE COLL : APUD CANTABRIGIENSIS  
 IN PATRIS MEMORIAM CONDITO  
 PRÆFECTUS  
 VIR INGENUO VULTU FORMA VIRILI  
 SPECTANDUS  
 ANIMI CANDORE SANCTITATE VITÆ  
 A PUERITIA ÆQUALIBUS NOTUS  
 RERUM NAVITER AGENDARUM  
 AUCTOR STRENUUS IMPAVIDUS  
 PATREM UT CORPORE ITA ANIMO REFEREBAT  
 LABORUM APPETENS NELIGENS SUI  
 CHRISTI FIDELIS MILES ET SERVUS  
 AD VITÆ SUÆ FINEM  
 OBIIT PRIDIE IDUS FEBRUARIAS  
 MDCCCXCVIII ANNO ÆT. LIII

The following is Bishop Abraham's translation :

JOHN RICHARDSON SELWYN  
 younger son of  
 George Augustus  
 First Bishop of New Zealand  
 was for some time Bishop of Melanesia  
 and then Master of the College at Cambridge  
 founded in memory of his Father  
 He was a man remarkable for his  
 frank countenance and manly figure  
 well known from boyhood among his compeers  
 for singleness of mind and purity of life  
 being a strenuous fearless Leader  
 in all vigorous action  
 he reminded men of his Father  
 both in body and mind  
 thirsting for hard work and forgetful of self  
 a faithful Soldier and Servant of Christ  
 unto his Life's end  
 He died on the 12th of February 1898  
 at the age of 53 years



## CHAPTER XVII

### A FEW LETTERS ON SPIRITUAL MATTERS

IT is just possible that, in the interest aroused by the life of a stirring man who loved movement and adventure, his spirituality may be to some extent passed over. Yet Bishop John Selwyn could never have achieved what he did had he not had a deep wellspring of spiritual life within him. Given to prayer from his childhood's days, he lived as in the sight of God. He was not much addicted to talk on religious matters, but his letters contain more allusions to this side of his life than might have been expected. Some few are given here that those who may be trying to follow his example in some little way may better learn what manner of man he was :

*To one grieving over a Son's fatal Illness.*

“Your letter arrived just when I was at my worst, and all I could do was to tell you of my loving sympathy and prayers. And what more can

we do than commend you to Him who knows why He sends you this bitter trial, and why He calls to Himself the young life which He sent into the world through you? This mystery of pain and sorrow is with us always, and it would be unbearable (as I have seen it unbearable amongst those who have no hope) had not our God's Only Son taken the pain and sorrow on Himself, and thereby taught us that it is no blind fate, but something which hangs on the very deepest love of God Himself. And so we turn to the Man of Sorrows in our sorrow, and find grace to help in time of need. And you will find that grace in helping to bear up your boy's soul and bring him nearer to God, so that the dread may pass away, and he may find peace and rest in the arms in which you lay him. Do you know I think this will be the most sustaining thought you can have, that you must get close to God yourself and learn to trust Him, so that your boy may feel himself borne by the very strength of your mother-love and trust into the stronger love of the Father to whom she leads him. This is what I have been praying for you, very dimly and imperfectly, but with a strong certitude of the strength which I am asking for you. It is that you may be the channel through which, just as life came to him by you, so now the highest life may flow. This thought will keep your eyes ever upward, and looking up means being strong."

*As to joining the Church of Rome.*

“I feel all you say about the beautiful unity of the Roman Catholic Church, but I think you will find that that unity is more apparent than real. I cannot conceive that our Lord gave St. Peter such a definite headship as the Pope claims on the most slender authority. If He did, then St. Paul utterly resisted it, and he was right, when St. Peter was to be blamed and was wrong. And I cannot believe that our Lord delegates His power of infallibility to any mortal man. I would rather go on with our unhappy divisions than bow to that which I cannot believe. The declaration of infallibility cuts off the Church of Rome from the Catholic Church, which is a far greater thing. There is no such thing as an universal Bishop, and one of the greatest of the Popes, the man who sent Augustine, expressly disclaimed it. But there is a far greater division than this. The God—not the doctrinal, perhaps, though I think I could quote you one or two things on this head which would stagger you—but the practical God of the Roman popular Church is the Virgin Mary. It is a lovely idea that the heart of woman should be tenderer than the heart of man, and the popular mind has seized on it, and goes to the Virgin to influence her Son. But it is utterly derogatory to the Incarnation. Christ took on Him ‘humanity,’ not the nature of man or of woman, but our common

nature. If then you allow the woman to come between, you derogate from the perfect humanity of our great High Priest. I know the Church will quote you volumes to the contrary, but go into any country you like and see whose altar is attended and to whom prayers are addressed, and you will see that the Virgin ousts Christ."

*On the Love of God.*

"I know so well how at times the blackness seems to settle down like a London fog all of a sudden, and nothing seems to lift it, until you look up into the face of God. God is Love, and I for one can never conceive that God shuts out any human being from that love either here or in the world to come. But I think that a man can, and often does, as we know, so harden himself in sin here that *he* shuts away the love of God from himself. Now, God never compels, so that it is possible that this process may go on hereafter. I cannot conceive God not trying to reach the soul, but I can conceive the soul getting so hardened and devilish that it may go on resisting for ever."

*On Freewill—after discussing the first chapter of  
"Pastor Pastorum."*

"Suppose a husband and wife start together with wills which, though they love one another very

much, are yet constantly liable to clash, and do clash very often. But suppose that as time goes on those wills fall into a mutual harmony and become practically one. Is the love and service which the wife renders to him less pleasing to the husband because now it is almost involuntary (I use the word advisedly), that is, it is unconscious? The ‘service’ has become ‘perfect freedom,’ and, though it is the result of effort in the past, it is now accomplished without effort. So with God. *Now* we have to strive to serve Him: *then*, knowing as we are known, we shall find it the most absolute joy to do His will. Surely that will not be a lower service, or one less pleasing.

“I don’t know how we shall be guarded from temptation there. What I think is that the Beatific Vision, the knowing God as He is, will make us like Him, so that we cannot fall. . . . I always think that there is a hint of what the effect of God’s presence must be on those who stand before it in the indignant answer of Gabriel to Zechariah who doubted his word: ‘I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God,’ as if he deemed it impossible that any being who did this could swerve one hair’s breadth.”

### *On the Holy Communion.*

“Yes, I know how time and space vanish at the altar, and that is why I dread the growth of non-

communicating attendance, as it tends to separate the Communion from the Sacrifice, and I think Christ has inseparably joined them together."

*On Work for Others.*

"Did I tell you that I have been writing to Miss K. about her 'Girls' Correspondence Guild'? She has got 300 ladies to join, and they each have a factory girl to whom they write. I am President, and have to write an annual letter. . . . I do think it might be a helpful thing. The feeling that there is a soul depending on you as a friend, even if it is only by letter, is very helpful.

. . . . .

"The idea of 'hope' is a very good one. I think people don't say so much about it as they do about other things because, first of all, everybody is more or less inclined to hope, and secondly, because Christ has given us so much hope that people are inclined to take it unduly. But this is generally about themselves, and it is in the case of other people that hope fails. So take the lesson and *hope when you work for others.*"

*On Enjoyment.*

"I think that spontaneous delight at anything that is lovely is a proof in itself that God means us to rejoice in His gifts. All nature does, as we see



in the glory of the spring, and children do also. Baby, if you ask her where the ‘pretty’ is, looks straight up at the swinging lamp, and jumps from sheer pleasure. And so I think the spirit we ought to cultivate is that happy and hopeful one which rejoices in God’s gifts. Not one that is not content to put away a good deal of the enjoyment of them if need be, but one that joys over them when they are there, and treasures them up for remembrance at other times.”

*On Death.*

“It is a great thing to have seen such patience in suffering, and it is a great thing also to have been taught that death is not a dreadful thing. If we think that it is only going to another room in our Father’s house, it is a lovely thought, for if we love God we shall like to be nearer Him.”

*On receiving God’s Blessing. A Birthday Letter.*

“God will give you His blessing and all that you need for the coming year, if only you open your heart to receive it. God’s blessing is like the Nile here [written from Cairo], only more constant even than that. For that sometimes fails, but He never does, and, as it is always ready to bless, it is the fault of the husbandman if he does not take advantage of the blessing. For, if his banks are out of order and his irrigation channels blocked up, then

the bounteous stream does him no good. So with us, if our channels are blocked up by sloth and want of care, the blessing of God finds no way. What we want is to strive, as far as we can, to be ready and to keep the channels of our heart clear and pure, and then God's blessing will flow down, and all the fruits of the Spirit will blossom out into their fullest growth."

*To a Girl on coming out.*

"This is a little line to greet the day in which you are to blush into womanhood. And indeed it is a very important day in your life, as it means that from this day forward you will have to stand more and more on your own feet, and that you will be more exposed to all that there is around you which *may* hurt you. Don't be afraid. We can't be kept in bandboxes and wrapped in cotton wool all our lives, and God does not mean us to be. When our Lord prayed for His disciples He said, 'I pray not that Thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou wouldest deliver them from the evil.' We have got to go into and to remain in the world, that we may do the duty which God has sent us to do. And so, when you get into it, as you will do to-morrow, make up your mind that God shall be with you there. Then, strengthened by Him, and putting Him first, you will use the world as not abusing it. For here is the danger, lest, little by little,

society, amusements, all the cares and occupations which surround you may make you forget Him. But if you remember Him, and make Him the keynote of your life, then you may use innocent amusements and pleasures as one of His gifts, and one of the ways in which you may glorify Him. And especially may this be the case in all your dealing with men of about your own age. I know what I am talking of when I tell you how much influence a pure bright girl's life may wield on them. You can raise them : never let them lower you.

“And so too with doubts and difficulties, which you will hear of now when you go out into the midst of them. Remember that, though you perhaps can't answer all of them, yet they are not for that reason unanswerable. Your own life, bright with the light of Him whose light is the life of men, will often be the best answer to others, and feeling His love will be the best answer to yourself. God bless you.”

*On Theatres, Dancing, &c.*

“As for theatres and dancing, I think —— has been taught that they are wrong, but I do not think so. They *can* be, and often are, *very* wrong, but so can everything else in this world. You can abuse anything. But I do not think that if used with care and moderation they are bad. I have thought a great deal about it, and that is my deliberate

opinion. Old Bishop Hackett used to say, 'Praise God and be cheerful,' and I think that is a very good piece of advice."

*To a Sick Person.*

"I wish I could help you to bear the trial God has sent you, and perhaps I can a little bit, as He has sent me one also, and out of it all I can tell you this, that, if you will trust Him and ask Him, our Father will give you the strength and, more than that, the grace to bear it patiently. He *has* given you this grace, for you have been good and patient and loving, and I have seen how the trial has deepened and strengthened you; and so you must believe that, though it seems so hard, there is love behind it, and He will make it accomplish what He wills. So look upward and outward, and you will see His love shining through the clouds, and He will tell you that you are doing something for Him even when you seem to be doing nothing."

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